

THE Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER WEEKLY FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT

Vol. I. No. 38.

BRADLEY AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
88 William Street.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 3, 1870.

TERMS: \$2.50 per Annum, in advance
\$1.25 for Six Months.

Price 5 Cents.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by BRADLEY AND COMPANY, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.



ALARMED FOR THE MOMENT BY THE FLAP OF THE CROW'S WINGS, THE WOLF DISPLAYED ITS WHITE TUSKS IN ANGER.

RED ARROW, THE WOLF DEMON; OR, The Queen of the Kanawha.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

Author of "The Ace of Spades," "The Scarlet Hand," "The Heart of Fire," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

THE CABIN IN THE FOREST.

ONE of the white red-skins—for the two who had seized Virginia were the dark-skinned stranger, Benton, and the tool of Murdock, K. Bob Terson, painted and disguised as Indians—tied a handkerchief, tightly over the eyes of the senseless girl, completely blind-folding her.

When this had been accomplished, Murdock came from his covert in the bushes, and approached the two.

The blackened muzzle of Murdock's rifle told plainly that it was he who had fired the shot which had stricken the young stranger, Harvey Winthrop, to the earth, even while the kisses of the girl he loved were fresh upon his lips.

"The girl has fainted," said Benton, who supported the light form of the hapless Virginia in his arms.

"So much the better!" exclaimed Murdock; "it adds our purpose. We must convey her at once to the lonely cabin of the Kanawha."

"And this critter?" said Bob, kicking the motionless form of Winthrop, with his foot, carelessly, as he spoke.

"Is he dead?" asked Murdock.

Bob knelt down by the side of the young man.

"Yes, he's gone dead," replied the borderer, after a slight examination.

"I did not think it likely that he lived," said Murdock, with a grim smile. "I seldom have to fire twice."

"Well, you've settled him, for sure," observed Bob, with a grin.

Leave him alone then; the crows and wolves will finish him before the morrow," said Murdock.

"He ought to have known better than to fool round this piece of calico," observed Bob, with another grin.

"He won't be apt to do it again."

"No, dog my cats, if he will!" cried Bob, expressively.

"Can you carry the girl, Benton?" asked Murdock.

"Yes, easily," replied the one addressed, "leaving the motionless form of the young man in his arms, apparently without an effort."

"Let us be going then. If we can reach the cabin before she recovers, so much the better for my plan."

Murdock led the way, followed closely by Benton carrying the girl, while Bob brought up the rear.

A half-hour's march up the Kanawha and Murdock halted by the bank of the river. Drawing a dug-out from its concealment in some bushes that overhung the water, by its aid the party crossed the river.

On the other bank of the stream, they again plunged into the forest—first, however, carefully concealing the dug-out in a similar hiding-place to that in which they found it.

After a three hours' tramp through the thicket, they came to a little log-cabin in the center of a little clearing. The cabin bore the marks of decay, and the long grass that grew thick over the threshold, told that

the building had long since abandoned the dwelling.

Virginia had recovered from her faint some time before the party had reached the solitary cabin.

Terrible, indeed were the feelings of the young girl. A prisoner in the hands of the merciless red-men—for she had no suspicions that her captors were white—she shrank from the thought of what her fate would be. Then, too, when she remembered that she had seen her lover fall before her eyes, perhaps mortally wounded, she felt as if her heart would break.

The two disguised men placed the girl in the cabin; then Bob left Benton alone with the maid. Murdock was afraid that Virginia might recognize the borderer in spite of his disguise; but, as Benton was a stranger there was but little danger that the girl would suspect her captors to be of her own race and blood.

Benton removed the bandage from the eyes of the girl.

"Squaw—prisoner to Shawnee," said the disguised white, imitating the manner and speech of the red-skin. "No try to run or warrior take scalp."

Then Benton joined the other two on the outside of the cabin, closing the door carefully behind him.

"Well, the game is treed," said Bob, with a chuckle.

"Yes," replied Murdock, a grim smile of satisfaction upon his sallow face. "Now you two keep watch here and be sure that the girl does not escape. I will return to the station. Her absence will be discovered before long and search will probably be made. If they discover the body of the stranger, this Winthrop, in the ravine, which they will be sure to do if any saw them leave the settlement together, which is probable, it will lead all to suspect that the man was murdered by some strolling red-skins and the girl carried off by them."

"But may they not trace us?" asked Benton, shrewdly. "There are keen scouts in the station. If they once strike our trail, they'll be apt to run us to earth."

"There is little danger of that," replied Murdock. "After we left the ravine we struck the regular trail leading up the river. There are many fresh foot-prints on the trail; it will be difficult for even the best Indian scout on the border to pick out the marks left by us from the others. Besides, crossing the river would be apt to throw the keenest trailer off the scent. I do not think that any one will discover or even suspect our agency in the girl's disappearance."

"Tain't likely," observed Bob.

"No, I think that you are right, and that you will succeed in your plan regarding the girl," said Benton. There was a strange sound in the voice of the man as he uttered the simple sentence, and a peculiar expression in his dark, snake-like eyes. Murdock did not notice the strangeness of the tone nor the look.

"I can not fail," said Murdock, decidedly. "You will need food for the girl. Here in the hollow of this tree," and Murdock led the way to a small white oak, some dozen paces from where they stood. "Is some dried deer-meat, I think I shall re-

cue the girl to-morrow," and Murdock laughed slightly, at the idea, as he spoke. "There is a small hole under the logs in the back of the cabin, by which I can creep inside and appear to the girl in my new character of a saving angel, perilling all to rescue her from the hands of the red-skins."

"Yes, but may she not discover this hole and escape through it?" asked Benton.

"No, a heavy log on the outside, that can not be stirred from the inside of the cabin, prevents that."

"To-morrow, then, you'll return?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

Then Murdock left the two to watch the cabin and the prisoner, and plunging into the forest took his way back to Point Pleasant. And in his heart, as he walked along, he gloated over the success of the plan that had struck a hated rival from his path and given entirely into his power the girl whose fortune he craved.

We will now return to the little ravine wherein, stark and ghastly, lay the form of the young stranger, Harvey Winthrop; the man who had left home and friends to carve out a future by the banks of the Ohio, and who had fallen by the ball of the assassin, without even a chance to struggle for his life.

The little ravine looked bright and beautiful, the rays of the fast-dying sun glistened down, gayly, through the tree-tops and played in beams of lambent light upon the pale face, whose open eyes glared, as if in mockery, on all around.

The rocky glade was as fair to look upon with the dreadful evidence of man's crime lying in its center, as when, but a short hour before, its leafy branches had formed a living frame to a picture of true love.

A huge black crow flying high and lazily in the air caught sight of the white face that so steadily stared with its stony and fixed eyes at the sky.

The bird of evil omen swooped round in circling flight above the motionless figure.

Each circle was smaller than the previous one, each second brought the bird nearer and nearer to its destined prey.

Still stared the eyes upward—still on the white face played the flickering sunbeams.

With a downward swoop the carrion-bird alighted on the breast of the stricken man.

The blood that stained the hunting-shirt of the silent figure, crimsoned the talons of the disgusting bird.

With a harsh note the crow flapped its sable wings as if in gloating triumph over the coming feast.

One short minute more and the great eyes would stare no more at the sky above. The beak of the carrion crow would be scarlet with human gore.

But, ere ten seconds of that minute passed away, a slight rustle came from the tangled thicket that fringed the ravine.

The crow, with a hoarse note of anger, spread its wings, and, cheated of its prey—cheated of the great eyes and the banquet of blood—soared lazily upward.

Then, from the thicket with stealthy tread came a gaunt wolf.

A moment the beast stood upon the edge of the ravine. Then it scented the blood that had trickled from the breast of the man who lay motionless upon the rocks.

With noiseless steps the gaunt beast came onward. It halted by the side of the motionless figure.

The fierce eyes of the wolf peered into the face of the human, and the huge jaws opened and shut with an ominous clasp.

Then from the tree-top the carrion-bird stooped again to earth.

Alarmed for the moment by the flap of the wings, the wolf lifted its huge jaw and displayed its white tusks in anger. The prowling beast was willing to fight for the human banquet.

But, the carrion-crow and the huge gray wolf were comrades of old in the great green wood, and many a banquet had they shared together.

The crow opened its beak and the wolf licked its jaws as they stood by the side of the fallen man.

CHAPTER XI. THE SURPRISE.

BOONE, concealed in the bushes behind the fallen tree, on which sat the Indian girl and the red warrior, cursed the unlucky star that led the train to select the place of his concealment for a stolen interview.

The scout hardly dared to breathe lest he should betray his presence to the two.

They, however, looking with eyes full of love upon each other, thought only of the happiness that they enjoyed when thus together.

The girl was the daughter of the great chief, Ke-ne-ha-ha; her lover was a young brave known as the "White Dog." A warrior young in years, but who had already distinguished himself on the war-path against the foes of the great Shawnee nation.

The children of the wilderness, wrapped in the joy of the stolen meeting, had little thought of aught else, and never for a moment suspected that within arm's length, a listener to their conversation, lay the great ranger and scout, Daniel Boone—the man whose death-dealing rifle was destined to tumble many a plumed and painted warrior to the earth.

The scout, who fully realized the danger of his position, could see no possible way to escape. He knew full well that the slightest movement on his part would inevitably betray his presence to the two who sat on the trunk of the fallen tree. Once discovered, every warrior in the Shawnee village would be quick on his trail.

One thought only consoled Boone. From the conversation of the squaw and chief—Boone understood enough of the Shawnee tongue to comprehend what was said—he might learn something concerning the Indian expedition. If he could gain important information and manage to escape without betraying his presence to the Indians, then his mission would be accomplished.

"Is the chief satisfied?" asked the girl, with a smile, gazing full into the dark eyes of her lover as she spoke.

"Yes," replied the warrior. "Le-a-pah has kept her word. She is the singing-bird of the Shawnee nation. The White Dog will love her till the great lamp in the sky grows old and the spirit-light fade and die forever."

"Le-a-pah is the daughter of a great chief; he would be angry if he knew that his child met the young brave by the forest," said the girl, sadly.

"The White Dog is a young warrior, but the scalps of the Delaware already hang and dry in the smoke of his wigwam." The tone of the young chief was proud as he uttered the words that told of his prowess.

"The chiefs speak with a straight tongue," and the girl looked with pride into the manly face of her lover. "Le-a-pah loves the White Dog, but the great chief, her father, has said that she must be the wife of the warrior who is called the Black Cloud. The heart of Le-a-pah is sad, for she can not love the Black Cloud."

"The Black Cloud is old—the singing-bird is young. Would her father mate the bounding spring with the chill autumn? It is sad!" And the young brave shook his head sadly.

"The Black Cloud is a great chief," said the girl.

"When the White Dog comes back from the war-path against the white-skins on the Ohio, he will be a great chief, too. Many white scalps will hang at his belt, and his tomahawk will be red with the blood of the long-rifles," said the chief, proudly.

Boone, from his hiding-place, listened intently when the warrior spoke of the expedition to the Ohio. This was the very information he was after.

"The white-skins are many; the Shawnee chief may fall by their hands," and a shadow of apprehension passed across the face of the Indian maiden as she spoke.

"Then his spirit will go to the long home beyond the skies, and in the spirit-land will chase the red deer. But, if the White Dog comes back to the banks of the Scioto, then Le-a-pah must be his wife and dwell forever more in his wigwam."

"The Shawnee girl will be the wife of the young chief whom she loves as the sun loves the earth, or she will never sing in the wigwam of a chief."

"Good!"

The young brave drew the slight form of the unresisting girl to his heart.

"The chief will love the singing-bird while he lives; when he dies, her face will be in his heart," said the warrior, fondly.

"When does the chief go on the war-path?" asked the girl.

"Three sleeps more, and the Shawnees will burst like a thunder-cloud on the pale-faces," replied the Indian.

"On the Ohio?"

"Yes," answered the chief.

"Now, if the red heathen would only say what," muttered Boone, listening eagerly.

"The white-skins will fight hard." The girl was thinking of the peril that her lover was about to encounter.

"The red-men will fight as they have never fought before," said the warrior. "The tomahawk and brand shall scourge the pale-face from the ground that the Great Spirit gave to the Indian. The waters of the Kanawha shall run red with blood. The Shawnees have not forgotten the many braves that fell by the deadly leaden hail of the white-skins, many moons ago, by the Ohio and Kanawha."

The chief referred to the defeat sustained by the Indians at the hands of the border-men commanded by Lewis, which took place some years before the time of the action of our story.

"It is against Point Pleasant, then," said Boone, to himself, as the words of the Indian fell upon his ear. "Well, let 'em come! I reckon that we can blaze 'em as had the second time as we did the first. Now, if these young critters would only make tracks out of this, how quick I'd make a bee-line for the Ohio. But—dog-gone their copper-colored hides!—they don't seem at all in a hurry to go."

The scout was right in his thought. The two lovers were in no hurry to bring their love-meeting to a close. It was probably the last chance that they would have of being together, and they were anxious to improve the opportunity. Love is the same the world over, whether it springs in the heart of the savage, beneath the spreading branches of the oak in the forest-wilderness, or in the breast of fashion's votary in the crowded city.

Warmly the warrior pressed his suit and told of the deathless flame that burned within his heart. Coyly listened the girl to the avowal that she loved so to hear.

The lover eagerly pleaded for a farewell kiss from the lips that he ne'er had touched. Shyly the Indian maid refused the favor, though in her heart she consented.

The chief clasped the girl in his arms. She, with assumed anger, freed herself from his embrace and pushed him away. The chief, losing his balance in the struggle, tumbled over backward from the log, coming down plump on top of the scout concealed in the bushes behind the tree.

Quick from the throat of the Indian came the note of alarm. He realized instantly that the form concealed in the bushes must be the form of a foe.

With a mighty effort, Boone rolled the chief to one side, then sprang to his feet, prepared to fly for his life.

The Indian girl shrieked with terror when she beheld a pale-face spring up amid the bushes.

Her cry attracted the attention of the Indians in the village, and, with hasty steps, they rushed toward the line of timber, anxious to learn the cause of the alarm.

Boone felt that a desperate effort alone would save him. A foot-race through the forest with a score of Shawnees was the only chance, but to escape the vengeance of the Indians would require a fearful effort.

As the scout started, his foot caught in a clinging vine, and over he went on his face. Before he could recover, the young chief, the White Dog, was upon him.

The Indian was sinewy and stout of limb, yet he was no match for the stalwart scout. With a grasp of steel, Boone grappled with the red warrior.

For a moment they swayed to and fro over the earth; the scout trying to break the grip of the Indian, and he striving to hold the unknown foe until his brethren should come to his aid.

The Shawnees were approaching fast. Their shouts rung out on the air like a death-knell.

Thus nerved to redoubtable exertions, the iron-limbed scout swung the red-skin from the ground, and essayed to cast him from him; but, like a snake, the supple savage twined himself around the body of the white.

The cries of the Indian girl, alarmed for the safety of her lover, were answered by the angry shouts of the approaching crowd, who could plainly see that there was a struggle going on in the borders of the thicket.

"Help! help!" cried the girl; "this way! A white-skin!"

"Let go, your hold, you cursed red imp!" cried Boone, between his teeth, as vainly he tried to break the grip of the red chief.

The Indian now was merely trying to hold the white foe till assistance should come to his aid.

Desperate, Boone's hand sought the handle of his knife. The bright blade flashed in the air; a second more, and it would have been buried to the hilt in the body of the White Dog; but the Indian girl perceived her lover's peril, and sprang to his aid, grasping the hand of the scout just as he was about to plunge the knife in the red man's breast.

The red chief, taking advantage of the girl's aid, twisted his leg around that of the scout, then, with a sudden and powerful effort, bore Boone backward to the earth, upon which the combatants fell with a heavy shock. A second more, and the Shawnee warriors surrounded the contending men.

With many a cry of triumph, they bound the daring pale-face who had lurked so near to the Shawnee village.

CHAPTER XII.

KENTON SEES THE WOLF DEMON.

AFTER having secured, with tough thongs of deer-skin, the stalwart limbs of their prisoner, they bore him forward to where

the fire burned in the center of their village.

All the inhabitants, attracted by the noise of the capture, had left their lodges, and now pressed forward to look upon the prisoner.

Great was the astonishment of the Shawnees when the flickering light of the flames, falling upon their captive, revealed to them the well-known face of Daniel Boone, the great scout of the border.

A howl of delight resounded through the Indian village at this discovery. The redskins had no foe whom they dreaded more than the man they now held, bound and helpless, a prisoner in their midst.

A grim smile was upon the features of Ke-ne-ha-ha, the Shawnee chief, as he looked upon the face of the man who had so often escaped him on the war-path.

"The white-skin is no longer an eagle, but a fox; he creeps into the shadow of the Shawnee village, to use his ears," said the chief, mockingly.

"The Shawnees have already had proof that I can use my hands," replied the scout, nettled by the words as well as by the tone of the savage. "A chief that is not fox as well as eagle, is not worthy to go upon the war-path. His scalp should be taken by squaws."

The Indians could not dispute the truth of the words of Boone.

"What seeks the white chief in the village of the Shawnees?" asked Ke-ne-ha-ha. "Guess, and maybe you'll find out," replied the captive, coolly.

"The white-skin comes as a spy—a foe into the village of the Shawnee," said the Indian.

"When did any of your nation, chief, ever come except as a spy or a foe to the houses of the whites?" asked Boone.

"Ugh! the white-skin has stolen the land of the red-man. Cheated him with lies. Ke-ne-ha-ha is a great warrior—he will take the scalps of the long knives and burn their wigwams," said the Indian, proudly.

"You'll have to fight some afore you accomplish that, Injun, I reckon," replied Boone, whose coolness and courage astonished the red warriors.

"The white-skin shall die!" said the chief, fiercely.

"I reckon we've all got to die, sometime, Injun," answered Boone, not in the least terrified by the threat.

"Let my warriors take the prisoner to the wigwam of Ke-ne-ha-ha," said the chief.

The order was instantly obeyed. The prisoner was carried to the wigwam—one of the largest in the village. In the center of the lodge a little fire was burning.

The scout was laid upon a little couch of skins within this lodge; then, in obedience to an order from the great chief, the Indians withdrew and left the captive alone with Ke-ne-ha-ha.

The chief's wigwam stood only a few paces from the bank of the Scioto, that stream running close behind the Indian lodge.

After the Indians had placed the helpless prisoner within the lodge, they returned again to their scalp-dance around the fire, excepting a few warriors, who, under the leadership of the White Dog—who had suddenly found himself famous by his capture of the great scout—made a circuit of the forest surrounding the Shawnee village to discover if there were any more white foes lurking within the wood.

The search was fruitless. No trace could they find of the presence of a white-skin; and so, finally, they came to the conclusion that the daring ranger was alone. The Indians then returned to the village.

The escape of Kenton from the search of the Indians is easily explained. He had approached the village on the west, and, skillfully taking advantage of the cover afforded by the bushes, had, like Boone, reached the edge of the timber. From his position he commanded a view of the village, and from his concealment beheld the capture of his friend. Guessing shrewdly that the presence of one white man might lead them to suspect that there were others in the neighborhood, he determined to withdraw from his dangerous position. He had seen no sign of Lark since he had parted with him at the hollow oak, and he came to the conclusion that Lark had not yet reached the village.

Kenton retreated from his exposed position. Slowly making his way through the wood, his eyes fell upon a large oak tree. The thought suggested itself to him that, in the branches of the oak, he might find shelter.

So up into the tree he mounted.

Once secure in his hiding-place, vaulted in as he was by the leafy branches, he felt that he could bid defiance to any search that the Indians might make.

Hardly had Kenton adjusted himself comfortably in the tree, when he heard a slight rustling in the bushes to the right of the oak. The keen ear of the alert scout instantly knew that some one was moving cautiously through the thicket. The sound came from the direction of the village.

Kenton thought that, possibly, it was Lark, who, like himself, had scouted in to the Shawnee village, and was retreating to safer quarters.

Then, through the dim aisles of the forest came a dark form gliding onward with stealthy steps. In the uncertain light, Kenton thought that he recognized the figure of Abe Lark, the scout. Bending down

from his hiding-place, Kenton was about to warn him that a friend was near, when the dark form crossed a little opening upon which the moonbeams cast their rays of silvery light, and Kenton caught a glimpse of the form as it glided through the moonlit opening.

The lion-hearted scout almost dropped from the tree, when his eyes fell upon that form. The hair upon his head rose in absolute fright; his eyeballs were distended, and cold drops of sweat stood like waxen beads upon his bronzed forehead.

Well might he feel a sense of terror, for there below him glided, what?

The vast proportions of a huge gray wolf, walking erect upon his hind legs, but the wolf possessed the face of a human!

A moment only the wolf-man or phantom—whatever it was—was beheld by the astounded scout, then it disappeared in the gloom of the thicket.

With the back of his hand Kenton wiped the perspiration—cold as the night-dew—from his brow.

"I've seen it!" he muttered, to himself. "It's the Wolf Demon. Jerusalem! I'd rather fight forty Shawnees than have a tussle with a monster like that. I always thought that the Injun story 'bout the Wolf Demon was all bosh, but now I've seen it; so near the Shawnee village, too! That'll be a hurricane soon, or I'm a Dutchman."

Leaving the scout to his meditations we will follow the course of the terrible figure that had so affrighted stout Simon Kenton, who was one of the bravest hearts on the border.

Cautiously and carefully through the thicket the creature glided. It was making its way to the Scioto river.

Suddenly the figure paused, and apparently listened for a moment.

The sound of footsteps of the Indian warriors, headed by the White Dog, scouting through the forest, broke the stillness of the night.

But, for a moment the mysterious Wolf Demon listened; then, as the Indians came nearer and nearer, with a leap, as agile as that of the squirrel, the terrible form seized hold of a branch of the oak beneath which it was standing, and swung itself up into the concealment of the leaves of the tree.

The Indian braves came on and paused for consultation under the branches of the very tree that concealed, in its leafy recesses, the terrible scourge of their race.

"Wah! The pale chief is alone," said one of the warriors; "no other pale-face is within the wood."

"He is a brave chief to come alone to the lodges of the Shawnee nation," said another of the warriors.

"Boone is a great brave," said the White Dog, who felt a natural pride in extolling the bravery of the prisoner whose capture was placed to his credit.

"He will never take the war-path against the Shawnees again," said one of the braves, with an accent of satisfaction.

"No; his scalp shall blacken and dry in the smoke of a Shawnee's lodge," said the White Dog.

"It is good," responded another, with a grunt of satisfaction.

"The great white skin will die by the fire, and the red braves will dance around him with joy," said the Indian who had first spoken, with a fierce expression of delight in his voice.

"The long-knife was alone—no more are within the wood; let us return to the village," said the White Dog.

The other warriors grunted their assent, and the party, turning upon their heel, took the way leading back to the village.

Hardly had the figure of the rear-most savage disappeared in the gloom of the wood, when forth from the tree came the terrible figure.

Lightly it bounded to the ground, and, with a glittering tomahawk clutched in its paw, followed swiftly but cautiously on the track of the red-men.

The Indians, however, kept together. Had one remained behind the other he would never have lived to have told what struck him.

The terrible form followed to the edge of the timber, and ground its teeth in rage at the escape of its foe.

Then it headed again for the river, keeping within the shelter of the timber. The river reached, the mysterious prowler took advantage of the stream's bank, which had been hollowed out by the washing of the water, to reach the rear of the wigwam of Ke-ne-ha-ha in which Boone was confined.

There, in the very shadow of the wigwam, the terrible figure lay upon the ground concealed by the darkness, and listened intently.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 35.)

No other bird has such power as the albatross of sailing in the air with motionless wings. This power belongs only to birds of great wing power and considerable weight. For this purpose it is necessary for the bird to gain a certain velocity by the flapping of its wings, when, by properly inclining them to receive the passage of the air below them, it is kept up like a kite against the force of gravity; and this sailing lasts as long as the momentum is not exhausted. An albatross has been known to sail in this way, with the body and wings perfectly motionless, for more than an hour (though this is an unusually long time), when a few strokes of the wings would be sufficient to recover the lost motion.

A POOR EXCUSE

BY JOSE F. MORAN.

I was christen'd as Patrick O'Leary. But they call me Blunderin' Pat. For it seems I can never do anythin' right. No matter what I may go at I am sure even think I am crazy.

But that same shore I never downed. For, I find in excuse, be it ever so poor, is better be far than none!

I loved sweet Miss Kitty Mulcahey. If she'd go to see "Archie Na Korne," An' then because I don't take her, becor, She'd be a chaffin' wale!

"Steady didn't say that I take you— I only said if you was gale!"

Thinks I to myself it's a poor excuse, But it's better be far than none!

Then big Carey up an' insults me, An' I says to him I'd make him red-hot, But somehow he sticks it all 'till I'd just bin, An' somewhat of course I back'd.

"Yer beautiful face I'd disgor," Which would be too bad I must own!" That was me excuse, an' I think you'll admit 'Twas better be far than none!

Jacked Kate McCann if she'd marry me, When I met her one night to a dance, Then, because I back'd out, she says she spoke to the saints.

That she'd send me the very first chance; "Share, how in the de'il can I do it— Ain't I married already, eh?"

Thinks I if that isn't a good excuse, It's better be far than none!

The Heart of Fire! OR, MOTHER vs. DAUGHTER.

A REVELATION OF CHICAGO LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. ATKIN, AUTHOR OF "ACE OF SPADES," "SCARLET HAND,"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PRICE OF A LIFE IN CHICAGO.

In a little dingy office just across the way on Randolph street from the courthouse, sat an elderly, gray-haired man. His features were thin and sharp. Cunning was in the little gray eyes, and trickery played in the lines of his thin-lipped mouth.

This was the celebrated criminal lawyer, Grover Chicks. A man of wide reputation; renowned for keen legal tricks, and notorious from the number of divorce suits that he had successfully carried through.

A knock at the door of his office drew the lawyer's attention from the pile of musty-looking papers that he was perusing.

"Come in," he said. A lady entered. She was heavily veiled and evidently intended that her features should be concealed as much as possible.

The lawyer was not at all astonished at the precaution shown. He had had too many queer customers in his dingy little office to wonder at the appearance of any of his clients.

"Lawyer Chicks?" said the lady. "Yes," replied that individual; "pray be seated," and as he spoke he rose from the table and handed his visitor a chair.

Politeness was Chicks's great forte. "I wish to see you on a little matter of business," said the lady, in a tone that betrayed considerable hesitation.

"Certainly, ma'am," said the lawyer, blandly, and then he murmured to himself, "another divorce case, I'll bet."

From the tone of the lady's voice, and by her slender figure, the lawyer judged that his client was a young woman.

"Pray be seated, ma'am," said the lawyer, again offering the chair, which the lady this time accepted.

"What I wish to know is, suppose that a husband should leave his wife here in Chicago, go away and remain absent for fifteen or sixteen years, would—"

and the lady paused. "I know what you wish to say, my dear madam," cried Chicks, who understood the case in an instant, or at least thought he did. "You wish to know if there would be legal grounds for a divorce. Certainly, ma'am; put the case in my hands and I'll insure you victory. No doubt about getting a divorce upon any such grounds as that."

Then Chicks leaned back and looked sagacious. "Yes, but you do not exactly understand what I wish to learn," said the veiled lady, quietly. "As I have said: suppose that the husband remains absent for sixteen years, and during all that time the wife never hears from him in any way whatsoever; and during that time she marries again. Then the first husband comes back and claims his wife. Has he a legal claim upon the woman?"

"None in the world!" cried Chicks; "the mere fact of his remaining away for that length of time constitutes a divorce."

"Then, if she did not wish to go with him, the law gives him no power to force her to comply?"

"None at all." "And the second marriage is strictly legal?"

"Of course." The lady drew a long breath as though a weight had been lifted off her mind. She rose to depart.

"How much?" she said, taking out a pocket-book well-filled with bills. "Five dollars, ma'am," and then, the very moment after he had spoken, Chicks was sorry that he hadn't said ten.

The lady gave the lawyer the money, and, without a word, departed. "That's an easily earned five dollars!"

chuckled the lawyer, sitting down again to his papers.

The lady descended the stairs. In her plain garb and with the thick veil drawn down closely over her features, few would have guessed her to be the dashing Mrs. Middough.

"I am safe, then," she muttered, as she emerged upon the sidewalk; "but no; not safe, for Bertrand can tell the story of my life to my husband. I am sure that it will not change his love for me, yet for him to possess the knowledge will be a thorn in my side. Bertrand must die. Once already since his return have I tried to strike him; the blow failed to accomplish my purpose; my second stroke shall be more certain. I'll go to my father and ask his aid. This man will come to see me tonight, to receive my answer. When he leaves me he must be waited for. He must never see the morning's light a living man."

And with these dark thoughts surging through her brain, Lurrie hurried onward. She soon reached her former home in Wells street.

Entering, she found her father behind the bar as usual.

"Why, Lurrie, gal," he cried, in astonishment, "come to see the old man?"

"Yes, father, I want your assistance," she said.

There was no one besides her father in the saloon, so she could speak freely.

"You do? well, spit it out; what kin I do for you?"

"You remember the man that came to this house just before I married the captain? The stranger that I told you I had met long years ago?"

"Yes, 'pears to me I do," said old Casper, reflectively. "The man that you was afraid of, the fellow with long black hair and black eyes?"

"Yes, he is the one that I mean."

"Has he run across you ag'in?"

"Yes, and he threatens to tell my husband all about my past life if I do not pay him to keep silent."

"I'd pay him with a good knife-dig in the heart," said Casper, savagely.

"Father, between you and me deception is useless. I hate this man, and I wish him dead," said Lurrie, earnestly.

"But what difference does it make to you if this poor shont does speak?" Casper asked.

"Father, this man is my husband."

"Your husband?" cried Casper, in amazement.

"Yes, I was married to him here in Chicago years ago. I thought him dead, but he is living to torment me," Lurrie said, angrily.

"Why, then you've got two husbands!" cried Casper, astonished.

"Yes, but the first marriage is void. This man holds two threats over my head. The first one was that he would claim me as his wife and force me to go with him. But I have consulted a lawyer and I find that he can not do so. His second threat was that he would see my husband and tell him all that he knows in relation to my past life. True, I do not think that it would change my husband's love at all, but it is not pleasant to have any one—much less the captain—know aught of that life which should be buried from the world forever."

"The only way then to keep him quiet is to put him where he can't talk," said the old man, grimly.

"You are right, father, that is the only way," replied Lurrie, firmly.

"Can he be got at easily?" said Casper, thoughtfully.

"Yes, he is coming to see me to-night at my house on Michigan avenue. He will come between seven and nine."

"And if any one should 'lay' for him about that time, they wouldn't be apt to miss him?"

"No."

"All right; I'll fix it," said the old man, with an air of satisfaction. "But, Lurrie, gal, it will cost money."

"I care not what it costs, so that I am free from his presence," cried Lurrie, fiercely.

"You don't love him much, now, do you?" said the old man, with a chuckle.

"Love him!" and Lurrie's lips curled in scorn; "hate is too weak a word to express the loathing that I bear for him. All Chicago is not large enough to hold this man and me. One of us must die."

"All right; I'll fix him," said the old man; "he's a stranger and will never be missed. I know a couple of fellows that I think will do the job up prime; they've just come from California. I reckon that they ain't over and above flush, so they'll probably be reasonable."

"No matter what the cost is, so that it insures his death." There was no hesitation visible in Lurrie's voice.

"I'll fix it; leave it all to me, 'cos you don't want to be mixed up in the affair at all. I'll see the boys, and arrange the job. He'll leave the house between seven and nine, eh?"

"Yes."

And so the death of Bertrand Tasner was planned.

Lurrie returned to her own splendid home on the lake shore. Yet what was all the luxury by which she was surrounded to her while the demon of fear was in her heart.

"To-night will free me from this man," she thought. "To-morrow I can breathe again, freely. Bertrand will be removed

from my path, and then this girl, Pearl, must follow. Once she is removed, I will find some way to break the gilded chains that bind me to this old man, and then to win the love of Edmund Kelford."

After Lurrie's departure, old Casper, leaving the house in charge of a shock-headed boy, his assistant since Rick had left—for that worthy had suddenly disappeared one morning, without even taking the trouble to say good-by—proceeded down the street.

He halted at a dingy saloon, a few doors from his own.

Over the door of the saloon was the sign, MILWAUKEE HOUSE.

Casper entered.

"Is Dick Goff about?" he asked.

"He's inside," said the barkeeper, pointing to a door to the right of the bar.

Casper opened the door and entered the room.

Two men were in the apartment, busily engaged at a game of cards.

The two were rough-looking fellows, with small, evil eyes, and bull-dog faces.

"Hello, old man, what's up?" asked the larger of the two, who apparently knew Casper well.

"A little job," replied Casper. "Do you want to make some money?"

"You bet!" said the rough, who was the notorious Dick Goff in person—a man well known to the Chicago police, as well as to the prison officials at Joliet.

Casper sat down and explained to the two what he wished them to do.

After he had finished, Dick cogitated for a moment.

"It must be done to-night?"

"Yes," Casper answered.

"How much tin?"

"What do you want?"

"He's to be laid out stiff?"

"Yes."

"Five hundred."

"Give you a hundred apiece."

"Too little."

"Take or leave it," said Casper, rising.

"Hold on; throw in the beer!"

"Yes."

"It's a bargain."

That night, at seven o'clock, two men lounged carelessly up Eighteenth street to Michigan avenue. They walked down the avenue till they halted in front of the Middough mansion.

The night-birds were waiting for their prey.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SNARING A HEART.

Kelford sat in the parlor of the Middough mansion. He had called after supper in quest of Wirt, but that gentleman had not returned home since dinner. In obedience to Mrs. Middough's urgent request, Kelford had entered the house. In fact, he needed but little urging, for a strange fascination was exercised over his nature by the wife of the old captain. In vain he struggled against it, and strove to cast off the subtle influence that was weaving its dangerous meshes around his heart.

Vainly he said to himself: "This woman is the wife of another; why should I think of her?" and yet he did think of her.

And at the same time he loved Pearl Oudlipp with all the ardor of a man's first love. Such is the inconsistency of poor, weak human nature.

The man felt that he was in peril every minute he spent in the presence of golden-haired, blue-eyed Lurrie; and yet he did not avoid that peril, but rather courted it.

He was beginning to think that the love he felt for Pearl was but a hopeless, aimless passion; that he would never win her, and that it would be better for him to crush the passion from his heart. A subtle demon whispered in his ear, and urged him to forget the pure and holy love he felt for the poor girl in the smiles of elegant Lurrie. The same instinct was dominant in his nature that urges the hopeless man to seek forgetfulness in the wine-cup.

And so he sat in the Middough parlor, face to face with the dangerous siren who had lured the old captain to make her his wife.

Lurrie's joy was plainly evident in her face. The fierce passion that she called love was raging in her heart. For Kelford's sake—to win his love—she would have dared the fires below.

To have looked in the face of Lurrie, none would have guessed the evil passions that swayed her heart.

"Where is the captain?" asked Kelford.

"He has gone to Milwaukee on business," replied Lurrie. "I do not expect him home for three days."

"You must miss him greatly," Kelford said.

"No," Lurrie answered, truthfully.

"You do not?" Kelford asked, in amazement.

"No."

"That is strange."

"You would not think so if you knew the truth," Lurrie said. "I do not know why I should say this openly to you, for I suppose I ought not to speak of it, and I am sure that I would not say it to any one but you. I know you to be a gentleman, Mr. Kelford, and I am sure that you will not betray the confidence that I repose in you."

"You may rest assured of that," said Kelford, quickly.

The snare was closing, slowly but surely, around the heart of the young man.

A married woman should have but one confidant, and that confidant her husband. "I am glad to hear you say so," said Lurie, looking the young man full in the face with the glorious eyes so full of subtle witchery.

Kelford was dazzled as he looked upon the eyes; dazzled as he would have been had he gazed upon the sun at noonday. "You can hardly guess how much I wish for some one to whom I can speak freely and without reserve," she said, with a mournful accent.

"Your husband?" suggested Kelford. "How can he be a man of his years, have aught in common with a girl like me? We are matched but not mated. I thought that I loved him, but I was wrong. It is the affection of a daughter toward a father, not the love that a wife should bear her husband."

"But, you have discovered this truth too late," said Kelford, frankly. "You can not now repair the error." "You forget that we live in Chicago," said Lurie, archly; "Chicago is famed for divorcees."

Kelford laughed at the words. "I am afraid that our good city is much abused by the outside barbarians." "But there is a good deal of truth in my words," said Lurie, smiling.

"I do not deny it," replied Kelford; "but, how long is it since you discovered that the love you bore your husband was not the one that should fill your breast?" "I can hardly answer that question," said Lurie, slowly, and dropping her eyes from Kelford's face to the carpet.

"Not answer it?" said Kelford, in amazement; "is it possible that you do not know?" "Yes, I know, and yet I can hardly answer," and Lurie cast a swift glance under the long, golden eyelashes at the face of the young man, and then again her eyes sought the carpet.

Kelford was perplexed. He had noted the glance, swift as it was; but, its meaning he feared to guess at, even in the secret of his own thoughts. "That is odd," said Kelford, slowly; "I can hardly understand how that can be."

"Perhaps I could tell some one else, but I can not tell you," said Lurie, softly. "The hot blood surged up into Kelford's face. The truth flashed upon him, and yet he could hardly believe it. Bewildered, he asked himself if this golden-haired beauty could be in love with him."

"You can not tell me?" he said, mechanically. "No, for then you would guess a secret that is better for both of us you should not know. I can tell you a little of it though, and I will. I know that I do not love my husband, because, since my marriage, I have met one that I do love."

"Is it possible?" Kelford was in a maze. Two passions in his heart were struggling for mastery; first, the love he bore to Pearl—hopeless passion though it was—second, the wild infatuation that the spells of the golden-haired beauty had caused.

"Yes, I might tell you the truth; tell you, whom I ought not to tell. But, I have spoken the words and I will not re-call them. I pledge you my honor that I will not repeat them," said Kelford, earnestly. "I am not afraid of that," replied Lurie, quickly. "I know that I can trust to your honor. Oh, Mr. Kelford, I do not believe you can guess how bitter it is for a woman to discover that she is bound for life to a man that she can not love as she should love him."

"We can not always have things to our liking in this life. There's many a love in the world that never meets its reward." Kelford spoke feelingly, and as the words passed from his lips, before his eyes rose the image of Pearl Culpepper, the pale face wherein was enshrined the large eyes so full of mournful sweetness. Then, for a moment, the spells of the siren were powerless; the silken meshes that passion had spun around his heart were burst like cobwebs.

Lurie guessed from his face what was passing within his mind. She saw that her influence was waning. The angry spirit of a demon was in her heart, but no traces of it appeared in her face. "And that, I fear, will be the fate of the passion that fills my heart," she said, slowly and mournfully. "I know that it is sinful for me to even think of it, but I can not help it; I am only a poor, weak woman, not a giant in will. I have striven—oh! striven so hard to conquer this passion—to drive it from my heart and forget the man whose noble nature made me love him, despite myself. And as she spoke so earnestly and so pitiously, she looked Kelford full in the face. The eyes fascinated him as the eyes of the serpent fascinate the bird."

Again he felt that he was in danger. Something whispered him to fly from the baleful presence of this woman, who was so weak in her agony and yet so strong in her helplessness. But, the impulse was not strong enough to break the meshes that her passionate eyes had again woven around his heart.

"This is a terrible situation for you," Kelford said, earnestly. "Is it not, and yet I must bear it!" she cried, hastily. "I do not know how to advise you," the young man said, after a pause. "And I can not tell you. My head is in a maze whenever I think of it."

"Why not avoid his presence?" suggested Kelford, slowly. "And so lose the little ray of sunlight that fate permits to beam upon my life-path?" she cried, impulsively. "But, if that sunlight is destined to be succeeded by a still darker gloom—" "Take away the light of his presence and I am in the gloom and darkness of the tomb. Seeing him is the only comfort that I have."

"And do you see him often?" Kelford asked, and then the moment after felt sorry that he had put the question. "Not half so often as I could wish," she replied, quickly. "I have never seen him but once alone, and the joy that that meeting gave me tells me full well how happy I would be if fate should ever give me to him, forever and forever."

Kelford felt as if he was under the influence of some terrible dream as the passionate words came from Lurie's red lips. "You will think I am foolish, I know, when I tell you that I sit at the window yonder, for hours together, only to catch sight of him as he passes along the street. And the days I do not see him, I go up-stairs to my rooms, lock myself in, and in scolding, bitter tears strive to forget my misery."

"Does he know that you love him?" Kelford asked, slowly. He felt that some irresistible power was drawing him quietly, but surely, to some dreadful grief. He guessed who the man was that this beautiful woman loved with such a fierce and guilty passion. He knew that he ought not to be eager to learn the truth, and yet he could not resist the wish to do so.

"How can he know that I love him, unless he reads the truth in my eyes?" Lurie asked. "I am not a young, unmarried girl; if I were, then I might exert the powers that Nature has given me to make him love me; but, as it is, I can not. I must be secret and be silent; must crush the love that is burning in my heart, and thus suffer untold misery."

"I am sorry that I can not aid you."

"But you can," said Lurie, quickly. "Indeed, in what way? Let me know, and I shall be only too glad to oblige you."

Kelford spoke earnestly. "This man that I love thinks himself in love with another woman. She does not return his passion, therefore, I know that he can not really love her; that it is only an infatuation on his part, for if he did love her, really and truly, she could not help loving him in return, so noble is his nature. I can not bear the thought that any other woman should win him. I am young yet; my husband is an old man. In the course of nature a few years will set me free; then, if he is free I can win him. I wish that you would see him, tell him that I love him; that will relieve my heart. Will you do this?" Full of pleading was the tone in which Lurie spoke.

Kelford was puzzled. He thought he had guessed Lurie's secret, and yet her speech told him that his guess was wrong. "I will do as you wish. Where can I see this man?" he asked.

"Here, to-morrow night at this same hour," she replied.

"Here!" Kelford said, in astonishment. "Yes, here," repeated Lurie; "I will invite him here on some pretext; he will not guess why I wish to see him."

"And you are sure that he will come?" "Yes."

"Very well, then, I will come, too."

A knock at the door interrupted the conversation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A STORMY INTERVIEW.

In obedience to Lurie's summons, a servant entered the room.

"I beg pardon, ma'am, but a gentleman wishes to see you."

"To see me?" said Lurie, with affected surprise, for she knew full well who the visitor was, and why he came.

"Yes, ma'am. He wished to see you personally," so he said, replied the servant.

"Very well; show him into the library and tell him that I will see him in a moment."

"Yes, ma'am," said the servant, and then he departed to bear the message. "You will excuse me for a few minutes," Lurie asked, smiling sweetly upon the young man.

"Yes, but I must wish you good-evening," said Kelford, rising. His head already ready was in a flame; he did not dare to risk a second interview now with the golden-haired siren.

"Must you go?" There was a world of regret in the tone of Lurie's voice as she put the simple question.

"Yes," replied Kelford, slowly. In Lurie's face and voice he read a truth which gave him both pain and pleasure. His better nature contended with the wild infatuation that the spells of the blue-eyed siren had cast about his heart.

"I am so sorry; but you will come again?" she asked, quickly and eagerly.

"Yes, to-morrow night."

"The hours will be very long ones till to-morrow night comes," Lurie said, sadly.

"I hope not," Kelford replied. He hardly dared to trust himself to speak. All the good within his nature was striving against the evil fascination exercised over him by this bright-eyed spirit.

"I know that you will be long hours and sad ones, too, until I look again upon your face!" Lurie cried, impulsively.

"But, good-night; I will not detain you longer. I see that you wish to leave me."

"Lurie!" exclaimed Kelford, reproachfully. "That is right, call me Lurie!" she cried. "It is the first time that you have ever done so. I hope, though, that it will not be the last. But, good-by," and she extended her hand as she spoke.

Kelford took the little white hand within his own. The warm pressure tingled through every vein within his body. That single grasp made him Lurie's slave.

A few words more of aimless import, and Kelford left the house.

As the cool night-air struck upon his fevered brow, he vainly asked himself if he had not been in the mazes of a dream; if the scene, in which he had played so prominent a part, was in truth reality.

As Kelford proceeded up the avenue toward his own house, two men came from the darkness of an alley-way and followed him cautiously. They had proceeded but a few steps only, when a third, who had apparently been concealed in a doorway a little further down the street, overtook the other two.

"Hold on," said the third man, addressing the two who were following Kelford; "that ain't the man."

"No?" growled one of the two addressed, in a tone which showed his deep disgust.

"No; the one you want was the fellow that just went into the house."

"What! that tall fellow?" "Yes."

"He's a wopper, he is; he'll make a tough old fight if we give him the chance."

"Jump on him, suddenly," suggested the third stranger. "You bet, as we used to say in Frisco," said the other, with a grin.

Then all three returned to their former stations, and apparently the street was again deserted. No one would have guessed that the darkness of the night hid three men on murder intent.

Had it not been for the presence of old Casper, who was the man who had stopped the two roughs from following in the footsteps of Kelford, Bertrand Tansor's good star would have saved him from the night attack, and the young man would have been the victim.

Kelford went straight to his house, but, restless and untrusting, he could not remain there. In search of something to distract his mind and quell the fire raging so wildly in his veins, he jumped into a car and rode down-town. There he met a party of his friends, and for the first time in his life joined them in a "time."

Kelford that night went home flushed with champagne. Midnight was over, and the clocks were striking two when he retired to rest.

And Pearl that night? When she came from the little shop, her place of toil, she found no Edmund Kelford waiting for her! It was the first night that she had ever missed escorting her home since they had become acquainted.

The way home had never seemed so long and lonesome to Pearl as it did that night. Her heart was heavy with fear; fear for the man whom she had repeatedly said that she did not love. Her thoughts suggested that Kelford was ill. She did not think even for a single instant that anything but sickness could keep him from the test that he had assigned to himself.

Pearl's pillow that night was damp with tears. The young girl cried herself to sleep; cried, she knew not why, except that she felt all alone in the world; yet, even amid her tears she would not own, even to herself, that she loved Edmund Kelford.

Lurie, after Kelford's departure, proceeded up-stairs to the library where she had ordered her visitor to be shown.

She knew, of course, who that visitor was, and was nervously herself to meet him. She knew the scene would be a stormy one. A man like Bertrand Tansor was not to be defied without a struggle. She knew that the struggle was at hand, and she was prepared for it.

She opened the door of the library and entered.

Within the room, cooily, in the arms of a huge-cushioned chair, sat Bertrand Tansor.

Bertrand looked at Lurie searchingly as she entered, seeking to read in her face the determination that she had arrived at. But, the face of Lurie was as a sealed book, even to the keen eyes of the ex-road-agent.

"I have come, you see, as per appointment," he said, opening the conversation. "Yes, I see," Lurie replied, shortly.

Bertrand frowned. Neither the words nor the tone pleased him. He foresaw that all was not smooth sailing ahead.

"Well, have you thought over my words?" he asked, slowly.

"Yes," answered Lurie, quietly. "And you have made up your mind as to what course you will pursue?" "I have."

Again Bertrand frowned. The coolness and quiet of Lurie boded danger to him.

"And what do you intend to do?" Bertrand put the question, but felt sure that the answer would be before Lurie opened her lips to reply.

"Refuse all your demands!" "Refuse!" exclaimed Bertrand, and an ominous light gleamed in his dark eyes.

"Yes, I refuse," said Lurie, coldly, quietly, but firmly.

"Do you know what you are doing?" cried Bertrand, with a lowering look.

"Yes, I am fully aware of what I am doing," she replied, without heeding his frowns.

"You are mad," Bertrand cried. "No, I am not; but I have been mad, to seem, even for an instant, to yield to your threats," Lurie replied, spiritedly.

"You defy me then?" said Bertrand, rising, and the angry fire gleamed in his eyes.

Lurie, though, faced him undaunted. "Yes, I defy you. Do your worst, still I defy you!"

"Good!" cried Bertrand, bitterly. "To-morrow, then, all Chicago shall know that the fair young bride that old Captain Mid-dough picked out of the slums of Wells street is the cast-off wife of Bertrand Tansor, the duelist—the Confederate captain—the western outlaw."

"And what care I?" cried Lurie, defiantly. "I have plenty of money. The crime must, indeed, be great in this world that a golden mask will not hide it, if crime or disgrace there be in ever having borne your detested name."

"But all your gold will not save you from me!" exclaimed Bertrand, with a threatening gesture. "To-morrow I will go before the proper authorities—show the proof that you are my legal wife, and evoke the power of the law to force you to go with me. I'll take you from all this splendor, and from the arms of the old dotard whose money has bought your charms. Far from here, I'll make you repent in bitter tears the hour when you dared to defy my power. That I'll do, or I'll do worse—I'll send you to State's Prison!"

Lurie laughed scornfully as his words fell upon her ears.

"You can not frighten me, Bertrand Tansor," she said, proudly. "I know full well that you have no legal claim to me. I have sought the assistance and counsel of a lawyer, and he has told me that, by your desertion of me, our marriage was rendered null and void, years ago."

A bitter oath rose to Bertrand's lips; but, with an effort, he kept it back. He knew that Lurie spoke the truth. His first blow had failed.

"Enough; I will not deny the truth; I know that, legally, I have no claim to you," he said; "you have parried my first blow. Now for the second."

"And that is?"

"I shall seek your husband; tell him all the facts relating to your past life—your marriage with me—your desertion of your child. It may anger the old captain when he discovers that his blooming child-wife is the grass-widow of a so-called desperate character, and the mother of a child. I shall also publish these facts to the world."

"And again I defy you!" Lurie cried. "My husband is in Milwaukee. I will hasten to him at once; tell him frankly the history of my life; confess the deception I have practiced upon him by allowing him to think that I was a young, unmarried girl. I shall plead in excuse my love for him; tell him that I felt that I could never be happy in this world unless I became his wife. My tears will flow freely, and I shall offer to make all the atonement in my power, and that I can only do in one way—by leaving him. Then I will throw myself at his feet, and implore him to forgive me before I go away from him forever. Can you doubt what the result will be?" asked Lurie, triumphantly.

"No, not for a single moment," replied Bertrand, angrily. "I know your power. The old fool will take you to his heart; tell you to forget, as he will forgive, all the past; call me an infernal scoundrel, and you a dear, suffering angel. There is no fool like an old one in love."

"And you see your second blow will fail. Bertrand Tansor, I have counted well the cost of defying you. Did I not think that I could do it successfully, I would not try to cope with you, but would yield to your demands. I am sure that you can not do me harm."

"I have yet another blow in store for you, Lurie," said Bertrand, menacingly. "Indeed!" and Lurie looked the scorn she felt. "Is it as potent as the other two?"

"I think so, and you will think so, too, when you hear what it is," said Bertrand, coolly. "It comes in the shape of your child."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 30.)

The Village Flirt.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

NORMA ELGIN was the belle of her native village, and as she stood leaning upon the little garden gate in front of her mother's cottage, her hair flowing and her dreamy blue eyes lit up with an expectant look, no one who saw her could think her aught else than beautiful. Though hardly sixteen she was already a woman, for a few short months after her thirteenth year she had lost her father and two brothers, and been left alone with her mother.

With a sufficient income to make herself and daughter comfortable, Mrs. Elgin devoted her days to Norma's education, and

though devotedly attached to her only child, she could not fail to see and condemn in her a certain amount of coquetry, which seemed a part of her nature.

Norma had many admirers, but one upon whom she lavished her sweetest smiles was a youth of nineteen, by name Frank Price, and a son of a well-to-do merchant of the little town.

Frank had fought Norma's battles when they were school children together, and his love for her had grown with his growth, and he had every reason to believe that Norma returned his love, though he had not told her of his devotion except by looks and actions.

The expectant look in Norma's eyes changed to one of pleasure, as she described in the distance a manly form approaching, and recognized her lover, Frank Price.

"He shall not see that I expect him," she said to herself, and immediately began to pluck a bouquet from the flower-beds around her, until she heard a cheerful voice exclaim:

"Good-morning, Norma: how lovely you look among your roses!" Apparently startled, Norma looked up, and said:

"Oh! it is you, Frank; come in."

Advancing toward her, Frank took her hand, and leading her to a small vine-clad arbor, said:

"Norma, I have come to tell you of my love for you; to ask you to be my wife. We have shared each other's joys and sorrows as children; let us now journey adown life's hill together."

A proud smile passed over Norma's lovely face, but an indescribable desire to inflict a wound upon the man she dearly loved, and then to heal it, took possession of her, and, withdrawing her hand from her lover's, she said:

"Frank, I thought we were friends, not lovers. Be content with my friendship, and do not ask for more."

A look of pain passed over the youth's features; his lips seemed as if about to reply, but then, changing his mind, he rose, bowed haughtily and walked away.

"Oh! what have I done?" cried poor Norma, as she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

The next morning Norma learned with a sad heart, when she read a letter from Frank, that, having received permission from his father, he had accepted a situation as supercargo of a vessel running between New York and China, and had gone to join his ship, which would sail in two days. How bitterly she reproached herself for driving from her heart's happiness the reader can imagine; and becoming embittered, instead of purified, by her suffering, she became a heartless flirt, wearing a smile upon her lips, while tears were in her heart.

Three years passed, and having learned through Frank's father that his son intended living in China, Norma accepted the offer of a wealthy Californian and married him. Bidding good-by to her old home, where she had known so many happy and unhappy hours, accompanied by her mother, she went with her husband to San Francisco, and though years went by, and children grew up around her, she never forgot her youthful lover, nor forgave herself for trifling with the heart of her first and only love.

Fifteen years had gone by since Norma and Frank parted that summer evening at the garden gate.

Norma had lost her husband and her mother, and with her two children was living quietly at a small summer resort near San Francisco.

Though a sad shade had stolen upon her face, and the dreamy eyes wore a wistful expression, as if trying to look back into the buried past, Mrs. Norma Thorne was still very beautiful, and had many suitors.

But few visitors were stopping at the "Sea-side House," and these soon becoming well-acquainted, aided each other in devising amusements which would while away the long, sultry days.

On one day a picnic was proposed, and toward mid-day, while all were seated upon the grass eating dinner, a gentleman of the party took out his sketch-book and began rapidly to make a drawing of the scene.

When finished, it was passed around for inspection, and as Norma looked at it, a deathly pallor overspread her face. Asking for a pencil, she wrote under the name "Frank Price"—for the author had put his name on the sketch—her own maiden name, "Norma Elgin," and passed it back to the gentleman who had drawn it.

He had seen her take the pencil, and, glancing at the name, the color rushed into his face, then receded as he hastily advanced toward her and offered his arm. Accepting the proffered arm, Norma and Frank—for it was no other—strolled away into the woods. The gentleman was the first to speak.

"At last I have found you, Norma! How strange I should not have known you before."

"No, Frank; for we both have changed very, very much. Will you forgive me the past—for I have suffered more than I can tell."

She saw forgiveness in his eyes, and when, an hour afterward, they rejoined the group, Norma was his promised wife, and their bright anticipations for the future cast in oblivion their bitter past.

philosophers since his day have endeavored to fill his shoes, none of them have been able to do it thus far, which is partially accounted for by the fact that he never had any shoes, always going around barefooted.

A LOVE LETTER.

BY ST. JOHN.

Scarcely twelve hours, and my darling I'm with you
You're so close to me, and I'm so close to you
Scarcely twelve hours, yet an age doth it seem;
A few hours of darkness, a few hours of light,
Then brighter than day shall my truest love gleam!

"Do I love you this eve as I loved you at first?"
Take life as a lingering day,
And my sun is just risen above the dark hills—
See! its sheen is but one single ray!

Behold, it advances in wide strengthening beams
To its zenith in glory above;
So, as life hurries on to its zenith of age,
It shall mellow and brighten my love.

Oh, darling, I love you! what more can I say?
Right simple the word is to write,
But the depth of that love no language can tell,
Which I send to you, darling, to-night.

Is it sinful to worship a being of earth?
Nay, beautiful flowers spring from sod;
But the heavenly soul of my darling we know
Has sprung from the bosom of God!

Ellice's Thanksgiving.

BY JULIA SOUTHERN.

A WINTER'S night, cold and clear, with
millions of bright-eyed stars frostily gleam-
ing in the blue, black arch above.

Ellice Raymond sat looking out into the
brilliance of semi-darkness, with the bright
glow of an open fire behind her, and the
delicious aroma of freshly-drawn tea in the
air about her. If she looked into the room
where she was sitting, she could see every
thing conducive to comfort; perhaps a slight
trace of more than that, although no luxury
abounded in her lonely, pleasant little home.

Not that Ellice lived all alone at the Dale
Cot; for since her husband's death, her lone-
someness had been shared by her daughter
from school.

Perhaps you will think that Ellice Ray-
mond must have been old, and possibly
ugly, because she was the mother of a grown-
up—no, growing-up, daughter. Such, how-
ever, was not particularly the case; indeed,
it remains to be decided who is the heroine
of the romance, Ellice Raymond, or Ida,
her daughter.

Sitting in the starry duskiness, Mrs. Ray-
mond was full of grace, and easy careles-
sness; and the fire-glow on her face showed
you a pale complexion, with no color at all
in the pure, marble-white cheeks; hair of
ebon blackness, just like her large, wide eyes,
and long, thick lashes, and arching brows.

Her lips were the only vivid spot on her
classic face; they were of deep, warm red,
just full enough to be passionate, and yet de-
cidedly un-sensual. Altogether, she was a
splendid woman, and after four years of
widowhood, everybody wondered why Mrs.
Raymond was not married again.

Perhaps she was thinking of that herself,
as she leaned back in her chair, watching
for the coming of her daughter; at any rate,
whatever her thoughts, a sad sigh escaped
her as she heard Ida's merry, ringing laugh
outside the door, and above it, the heavy,
firm, quick tread of some companion.

"It is Frank Fanfaron again!"
But though her lips murmured the words,
and a pained look crossed her face, there
was left of them no trace when Ida Ray-
mond opened the parlor door, all afish
from her rapid walk, her eyes so unlike her
mother's in the intense blueness, full of a
tender, witching beauty; half shy, half proud,
as she glanced deprecatingly at her com-
panion.

"I met Mr. Fanfaron, mamma."
No, Miss Ida! I insist, Mrs. Raymond,
on telling you that I waited at the junction
over an hour in the hopes of seeing Miss
Ida go by."

He bowed as he spoke, and then extend-
ed his hand, in his own frank, honest way.
Mrs. Raymond gave hers, after—it seemed
to her—a momentary hesitation.

"You are kind to accompany Ida home.
You will take a cup of hot tea? It looks
bitterly cold out doors."
"It is, Miss Ida—may I stay to supper?"
He had removed his overcoat, while Ida
laid aside her furs and sash.

"Just as you please, Mr. Fanfaron. Only
remember I have my French to translate
afterward, and can not be disturbed."

"Exactly! I promise to go just as soon as
I see 'Fasquelle' brought out."
Mrs. Raymond looked at them; at Frank
Fanfaron, so nobly good-looking, so jovial,
fine spoken, and gentlemanly; with his
brunette-brown hair, his fine hazel eyes; and
a keen pang of regretful memory came over
her as she saw how very like he was to his
father—ah! there lay the secret of Ellice
Raymond's life; the reason of the eternally
brooding shadows that haunted her wistful
eyes—she had loved him once—handsome,
haughty Delbert Fanfaron!

It had been the same old story—that
suffer who will, no one else will give heed
to their blasted lives, but go straight on in
the same path, to the same end!

I say, Ellice Raymond had trodden the
beaten road; first, there had been jealousy,
then coolness between Delbert Fanfaron and
her; then a quarrel; indifference and pique;
then a final rupture that shipwrecked
them both.

After that, both had gone their ways;
Fanfaron to marry a little French girl, and
Ellice to become Mrs. Raymond. And the
long, long years had rolled by, and now, in
the shaping of their destinies, it had come
to this: Delbert Fanfaron and his wife were
living at Fanfaron Hall, so he had earned,
and their only son was Ellice Raymond's
daughter's suitor—fatherless Ida Raymond!

What wonder was it that the lonely heart
sunk in utter sorrow? Surely it was no
wonder that she thought of her old-time
lover, or dreaded to see his boy coming to
woo her girl. At times she almost hated
young Fanfaron; and then, a glance at Ida's
bright, beautiful face would send a thrill of
compassionate shame through her heart that
she dared be so selfish.

And all this secret lay in her bosom alone;
not even her own darling knew of it; not
Frank Fanfaron had ever heard of it; even his
proud, elegant father up at the Hall, never
dreamed that the Mrs. Raymond, down at
the Dale Cot, where Frank used to go to
court the pretty, ladylike daughter, was the
Ellice of olden times!

Perhaps, when he would stop for a mo-
ment amid the whirl of business that sur-
rounded him to wonder where his first
love had ever gone, the anguishful light in
his eyes was an index of the unburied, un-
ending love that had lived so long.

Do you ask if it was wrong? this yearn-
ing in their widely separated hearts for each
other? Ask your own heart the question,
and it will tell you, though your cheek may
flush, and you are conscious that to every
whisper the truth would offend false prop-
riety.

That night, after the plain meal was over,
Ida brought forth her 'Fasquelle,' while
Mrs. Raymond sat down by the lamp, to
sew.

"By the by, Miss Ida, so long as I am to
leave you now, may I not be permitted to
come for you to-morrow for a drive to the
city? It is Thanksgiving, you know, and a
holiday."

A little start from Mrs. Raymond, that
made them both glance up.

"I hurt my finger with the needle, I
think you can go, Ida."

She spoke so calmly, so courteously, and
they forgot the little alarm. Ida accom-
panied him to the door; and when, after
the lingering lover's parting—unacknowl-
edged as lovers, even to each other—she re-
turned to find the lamp turned dimly down,
and her mother gone to her room.

And up-stairs, in the silent chilliness,
Ellice Raymond was crying over a little
faded note; and its long-forgotten remem-
brance had come to her so suddenly that
evening.

"Ellice, my little darling, be all ready at ten,
to-morrow, for our ride to the city. It's Thank-
sgiving, you know; and my mother insists on
your coming to dinner. Next Thanksgiving,
my little girl, you will be my wife, and we'll
eat together at our own table, won't we?"

"BERT."

That is what she was crying over; and I
think it would have touched most women's
hearts to think of all she was thinking of.

After a little while, she laid the note ten-
derly away, and went to her bed, wondering
if the coming 'Thanksgiving' would be as
full of grief to Ida, as one past had been to
her; the day, when, instead of the ride,
they began to drift away from each other;
and with a prayer for her darling's happi-
ness, she murmured an entreaty for strength
and resignation.

The morning did not disappoint the prom-
ise of the preceding night; it dawned as red,
as bright and clear as day ever dawned.

When Frank Fanfaron drove up to the
little front door, and Ida stood, robed in her
garnet poplin dress, crimson plush sash, and
white furs, Mrs. Raymond turned to
them with a new tenderness in her manner.

she thought her heart was breaking from
very bliss at seeing him again. He was
older, and handsomer; very grave, she
thought, and noble.

He bowed—he was particularly courteous
to women—and for the first time in twenty
years she heard his voice.

"Can I be of any service, madam?"
Shivering and paling, with averted face,
she murmured some indistinct words, and
handed him the note he had sent her, nearly
a score of 'Thanksgivings' ago!

Then in her eager anxiety she watched
him while he read it, standing before her,
all unconscious of who she was, so grandly
erect, and so sternly handsome.

His cheek paled, and she saw his fingers
tremble; then he dashed his hand across his
forehead, and then he looked at the note,
with a tenderness she knew was for her.

She sprang from her dark alcove, and laid
her hands on his arms.

"It is really me—oh, Delbert, you don't
quite hate me for it? I could not help it!
Shall I go away again?"

But one glance was needed; he closed his
arms around her, in speechless thankfulness,
and then pressed kisses on her quivering
lips.

"My darling, my long-lost darling! shall
I let you ever go away again? Not while I
live to keep you."

He rung the bell, and to a servant whis-
pered a hurried order, and then turned to
Ellice.

"I have sent for Dr. Grace; he will come
and marry us this very hour. I need not
ask you, my Ellice—I know you are all my
own forever!"

And when, several hours later, Frank and
Ida drove to the Hall door, there was a ring
on the fair girl's finger, and the proud young
lover introduced her to her father.

"This is my betrothed wife; he will be
your father, my Ida."

"And in turn, let me present my wife;
your mother, Frank, even as she is Ida's."

And amid the joy, the bewilderment, the
mutual explanations, the blissful hours
were on; and when the night-shades dark-
ened over the earth, and Frank Fanfaron
and the beautiful Ida, with their proud,
happy parents, sat beside the cheery fire,
Ellice—Ellice Raymond no longer—Ellice
Fanfaron stole away to the gorgeous upper
room henceforth her own, and blessed her
Maker for the joy of that Thanksgiving
Day.

der her mother's observant eye. It had
been proposed to her to leave Newport im-
mediately for their northern tour; but Maud
was no longer desirous of leaving. She
begged for another week or two. All she
cared for was to take her cousin for an es-
cort, and to go out along the beach to the
spot where their little adventure occurred;
there to sit and watch the in-rolling waves
for hours, while George read, or made paper-
boats, or talked to her, half-unheeded. He
was a boy of quiet tastes, and very fond of
her, so that he did not find this kind of ser-
vice so wearisome as it might otherwise
have been. He, nor any other, had the key
to her actions.

"Come, cousin, we must go home. I am
getting hungry; and aunt Arnold warned
me to bring you back in season."

Then she would arise, with a sigh, and a
pale, disappointed look, and with lingering
glance backward at the blue water, return
home, without appetite or spirits.

"There must be an end to this. I don't
like Maud's looks. We must have another
change of air," Mrs. Arnold finally de-
clared the trunks were repacked, and the change
made.

Wherever they stopped, if it were but for
a single day, Maud's beautiful dressing-case
must be taken out and placed on her table.
Quite mistaking the giver, she loved it be-
cause of the picture on the lid. She would
sit with it before her for hours. Marie jest-
ed about the sender, but her little pleasant-
ries fell on deaf ears.

The variety of travel did Maud less good
than was expected. Her eyes seldom lost
that eager, searching look which gradually
grew to be their one expression. When her
party entered a railroad car, a saloon, drew
up before a hotel, or in any place encoun-
tered strangers, her swift, nervous glance
ran over them in a manner which many re-
marked. It was as if she were expecting a
friend, whom she was disappointed not to
meet. The girl herself was unaware of the
traces her secret thought was leaving on
face and manner.

The Arnolds spent several weeks journey-
ing from one lovely place to another. It
was the latter part of September when they
reached home, and reopened their city
house. The first thing the mother did was
to send for the family physician. He did
not like the child's appearance, yet could
detect no traces of disease. He asked her
mother if she had any great mental uneas-
iness which had existed between her daugh-
ter and Ward Tunnicliffe.

"It takes a long time to recover from a
shock like that," said the old doctor, shaking

Maud Arnold's Trial:
OR,
THE BROKEN BETROTHAL.

BY MRS. M. V. VICTOR.

AUTHOR OF "THE DEAD LETTER," "FIGURE EIGHT,"
"WHO OWNED THE JEWELS," ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE PARISIENNE'S STORY.

"It was he! It was he!" she muttered,
over and over to herself. She hardly thought
of Randolph. "It was Ward," she contin-
ued to whisper. "Why did George not re-
cognize him? Ah, he shows himself to no
one but me. It was he! He follows me.
When I go home I will find Susie and ask
her if she, too, has not seen him. He loved
her so."

It is doubtful if Maud really believed that
she had seen Ward Tunnicliffe in the body.
She was yet too fully in the possession of
her reasoning faculties to believe that. She
knew the proof of his death was positive.
At least four persons had seen him when
he leaped from the ferry-boat; he had gone
down beneath the ice, and had not risen
again. No human being could have lived
five minutes in those freezing waters on that
winter night. He had never reappeared.
All these facts were as patent to her as to
the rest of his friends. She never for mo-
ment at a time, overlooked them.

We say, for more than a moment at a time
—because there were periods when, for a
brief instant, she believed that she saw
Ward Tunnicliffe, alive, before her. This
was at the moment when the person who
resembled him, or the spiritual presence of
the dead, was actually present to her. Hav-
ing once seen this startling resemblance, of
course she was constantly looking out for
it; therefore, constantly imagining that she
found it; as a frightened child, wandering
in the woods at twilight, finds what it fears
in every shadow.

"He watches over me," she repeated to
herself; "he has forgiven me, or else he
would not do that. He came, this morn-
ing, to save me from death. Strange,
strange!"

When her mother came to ask her if she
did not feel well enough to dress for the
evening, she found her flushed and excited.
"Your hands are hot—your pulse is
quick."

"It is nothing, mother. I have been
frightened; but I am getting over it."

Maud felt that Randolph's conduct could
not be palliated, and ought not to be kept to
herself. She sat up and told her mother
about it, only concealing who the sailor in
the boat had seemed to her to be. Mrs. Ar-
nold was surprised, and alarmed.

"Your father will punish him as he de-
serves."

"That is just what I dread, mother. It
will make the affair public. I think Mr.
Randolph will go away, now; it will not be
pleasant for him to stay; and if he does,
had we not better leave the matter between
ourselves? I should not like to become the
heroine of such a romance, dear mamma,"
and Maud laughed, a little nervously.

While they were discussing the matter, a
servant handed in a note; it was from the
Southerner, saying:

"Miss ARNOLD: I do not hope to be for-
given for what has occurred. The curse, which
I inherited from my father, was a violent tem-
per. Under your influence, I should have for-
gotten that I could be angry or unjust. But
of that I will not speak. I write this to say
that I will not further annoy you. I leave by
the evening train. The greatest favor you can
do is to forget."

"A favor easily done; and now, mamma,
I suppose we need say nothing about the
affair on the beach to father. If he refers to
Mr. Randolph's absence as if I were to
blame, I shall tell him about the deception
he is practicing. That will be enough."

She tore up the note as she was speak-
ing.

"So be it, for the present. Above all
things, let us avoid gossip. We had enough
of that dreadful kind of notice, last winter.
Maud, shall I send Marie to dress your
hair? If you look and act as if nothing
had happened, probably nothing will be
guessed."

Thus it proved. Miss Arnold was unusu-
ally admired during the evening promenade.
All that her beauty ever lacked to the com-
mon observer was color and warmth; it
was too cold; but this evening, the flush
lingered on her cheek and the light in her
eye; she was dressed with care, and seemed
gay and happy. Those who had heard of
the sudden departure of Mr. Randolph,
scanned her with curiosity, which was not
gratified by anything they could learn from
her, and she escaped with a few whispers
about her probable rejection of the Balti-
morean.

But from this time the change which
Mrs. Arnold had remarked in her grew un-

his head. "Maud was always high-strung;
her nerves have not recovered their equili-
brium yet. I thought, last winter, that her
sickness was entirely mental. Poor girl!
it was too much for her. Does she talk
much about her griefs?"

"No, doctor; she never mentions, his
name."

"That's bad—that's bad. These silent
troubles are the most dangerous. I wish,
madam, you would win her confidence—
make her talk to you. The more the better.
I don't like her looks. It's a bad sign when
a woman's tongue-tied—it's not natural.
Make her talk; and keep her out of doors
all you can."

Prompted by this advice, Mrs. Arnold
exerted herself, more than she had ever
done before, to watch her daughter and to
win her out of the silent way into which
she was falling.

"Why do you grieve so about Ward?"
she finally said to her, determined to probe
the hidden wound. "He is gone; he can not
come back." He went, too, by his own rash
deed. It is right for you to waste your
young life, to make all who love you un-
happy, by your constant sorrow for him? You
are our only child, Maud, and it makes us
wretched to see you in this state."

"Indeed, mother, I am not so very un-
happy. What makes you think it? But I
can never forget that perhaps Ward would
not have—drowned himself—with a shud-
der—if I had not sent him that note, when
he was in so much trouble. Is it not strange
that girl should have come here that very
day? If it had been before, or after, we
might have talked together, and it might
have been explained. I am so afraid that I
wronged him. Ah, mother, there is nothing
so hard to bear as remorse!"

Maud's head went down on her mother's
knees, and a groan, very pitiful to hear from
one so young, burst from her lips.

"What is it about a girl, Maud? I never
heard any thing."

"No, mother, I never told you, for I was
afraid after Ward—killed—himself—that
others would think more wrong of him. I
forgave him, mother; when I thought that
he did it. But lately, and more and more
every day, I believe the girl lied."

"Tell me about it, Maud. It will be bet-
ter for you to talk with me; perhaps my
judgment will assist yours in coming to some
conclusion. I shall not be afraid of judging
poor Ward harshly. Whatever were his
errors, they are between him and his God.
He was too sensitive to the world's opinion,
else he would never have been so rash."

Holding her mother's hands, Maud lifted
her pale face, with the dark circles under the
eyes, and the desolate, yearning expression
within them.

"There was a girl came here, mother, the
very day it happened. She asked to see
me, alone, a few minutes, and Marie brought
her to my room. She was small and young
—about my age; pretty, with black eyes, and
dark, wavy hair; a French girl, speaking our
language in a broken, childish way. Per-
haps it was because she was French that
Marie was so ready to admit her. When we
were alone together, she burst out crying,
and when she was a little more quiet, asked
me if I knew of any pupils I could get in
French and music for her father or herself.
They were very poor; they were not long
over, and they had no references. I did not
know what to say to her; I was sorry for
her; yet I could promise her nothing until I
knew more about her, even had I pupils to
recommend. I began to tell her that I
would speak to you, and that we would
come together to see her, yet all the time I
felt as if I were being imposed upon. She
was young, and seemed artless, and in trou-
ble, and yet her eyes did not give me a pleas-
ant impression. While I was blundering
over what to say to her, she interrupted me:
"I like not to tell mademoiselle what I
must tell her; but 'tis de right dat she must
know. She may be very angry, now; but
she happier, some time, and then she went
on to tell, in her broken way, that she would
not have been in America now, but in her
own belle France, where they had friends,
though they were not very rich, had it not
been for that young man—the faithless, false
Mr. Tunnicliffe. She related to me, at length,
how they had met, when she was out walk-
ing with her father, under the beautiful trees,
and how the young American had been so
kind to her father, and they had met and talked
often together about many things—Wash-
ington, Napoleon, all these great officers, until
her father was quite enchanted with the
charming young man, and invited him to
their poor apartments."

"She gave me the dates, mother, and it
was the very time that Ward was in Paris
with Mrs. Bowen, last fall, two years ago.
Then she went on to say how she, too, learn-
ed to love the fine stranger; she was a child,
but sixteen; and he brought her flowers and
presents, and told her how sweet and how
pretty she was, and how he loved to hear
her sing. She used to sing for him at her
dear old piano for hours. Then the time
came when he must go back to America; she
was very sad and wept much; but he kissed
her, and gave her his picture, and told her
that when both of them were a little older
he should be ready to marry—that he might
never come back to Paris, but that if her
father and herself would come over to New
York in about two years, he would find her
father a great many pupils, and he would
marry his little Antoinette."

"So her father, who thought so much of
the stranger's promises, sold off all his lit-
tle furniture, the piano, all, gathered in all
his small debts, and had just money enough
to pay their passage. They came to Ameri-
ca, joyous, full of hope. When they arrived,
they easily found out Mr. Tunnicliffe, for he
was a great banker. He went to him, to tell
him she had come. He was not glad to see
her; he broke her heart. He said she did
mistake that they should marry. He would
do something for her father when he had
time—now, he was very busy. But he could
not marry poor Antoinette, for he was just
engaged to a rich, and lovely lady, and she
must not tell Americans she came over to
see Mr. Tunnicliffe."

"Mother, I did not believe her yet; I said
so; she had a gold chain about her neck, and
she drew forth from her bosom a miniature,
and showed it to me. It was his likeness,
mother—a colored photograph, on enamel, I
think. The locket was gold, and the picture
looked as if taken when he was a little
younger than then. My heart withered
when I saw it. I hardly knew what I did;
but I believe that I emptied the contents of
my purse in her lap, and told her to go—that
she was welcome to Mr. Tunnicliffe."

"As soon as she was gone, I wrote a note
to Ward, telling him our engagement was at
an end, and placing my betrothal-ring in-
side the envelope, gave directions for it to
be handed to him when he called." At first

I thought I would see him, and hear his account of the affair, but I had such a headache I could not hold up my head. I felt that I should do my self-respect injustice to see him in such a state, so I sent the note. That was the last—the very last! Oh, mother, is it not dreadful?

"Sometimes I believe that girl's story to be either entirely false or much exaggerated. I torture myself guessing what Ward suffered when he got my dismissal in the hour of his business trial. It is too much! Sometimes I can not bear it."

"Have you been to see the girl since?" Mrs. Arnold's voice was calm and soothing, for she was alarmed at the intensity of feeling now revealed to her.

"No, mother. I was so agitated that I never thought to take her address, and she did not leave it. Sometimes I hope that I may meet her on the street. If I ever do see her again, I will compel the truth from her, whatever it is."

"All this entanglement can never be straightened out in this world, Maud. It is your duty to brood a little on possible over what can not be changed. If it is any comfort to you to think Ward innocent of such heartless conduct, you may safely believe him so. You know that all kinds of impositions are practiced for money; and on some very slender thread of flirtation or indiscretion, such as any young man might have been led into without real sin, she may have strung her story. At all events, he has gone from us, your parents are still here; will you not try, for our sake, to forget the past?"

Maud kissed her mother, while her tears flowed with a freedom which was healthful. She did feel the better for this confidence—yet she had confessed only half of what weighed so dangerously upon her mind.

For a few days Maud was more like her old sweet self; she sung to herself, as she moved about the house, was playful with her father, and willing to submit to her mother's wishes about going out and having company. They were so relieved at this improvement they were ready to spoil her with indulgence. One golden October afternoon she was sent out for a drive in the Park. Some circumstance prevented Mrs. Arnold from accompanying her daughter; but Maud was quite content to be alone. The pale sunlight, the soft air, the bright leaves fluttering silently from the frost-tinted trees, filled her with a melancholy so calm that it was almost peace.

"Drive slowly, Robert," she said to the coachman, "it is so pleasant here."

It was Saturday, and the usual concert was taking place. She had the carriage stop at a distance from the gay thousands congregated on the Mall, as part-colored and gorgeous in general effect as were the autumn groves. Soft notes and louder bursts of melody were wafted toward her. As she sat dreaming, listening, yielding to every temptation of her vivid imagination, it may be that the old fancy resumed its full power. Certain it is, that when she reached home, in the dim dusk, after that afternoon of enchantment, she burst into the dining-room, where the family were about to sit down to dinner, a wildness in her manner which caused her parents to start with an unpleasant foreboding. She had not removed her hat or shawl, and paid no attention to the presence of the man-in-waiting.

"I have seen him again!" was all she said.

"Maud, what folly is this? Go to your room and make yourself presentable."

Mr. Arnold spoke sternly, in mingled impatience and alarm.

"I tell you I have seen him," she repeated. "Nothing on earth can convince me to the contrary. Do you think I could be mistaken? It was he—living, well—not his spirit. I looked into his eyes; I touched his hand! Oh, why will he treat me thus?"

The pathos with which she spoke the last few words brought tears to Mr. Arnold's eyes; but he would not let her see that he was otherwise than angry; the fear of which he and his wife had spoken in whispers, was strong upon him now—a fear of something less endurable than death. He took her by the arm and led her into the library, followed by her mother; he was calm, outwardly, for he saw how dreadfully his daughter was excited.

"Tell me all about it, Maud. Just who you saw, and where, and how. Only try to be reasonable and quiet about it."

"I know what you think, father—that I am out of my senses. It is not true; you need not be afraid of that. I saw Ward again, to-day, and if I had any doubts before, when three times I believed I met him, I doubt it no longer. Living or dead, it is Ward I see."

"What makes you think you met him?"

"I got out of the carriage this afternoon, in the Park, to walk a little way and gather some colored leaves, and feeling thirsty, I passed under the arch of the large bridge near the lake to obtain a drink of water. He was sitting there, on one of the stone seats, reading a book. I had time to look well at him before he saw me. He has changed much, and he wears a different dress, but it is Ward. I was not very much startled. I walked straight up to him, laid my hand on his, and spoke his name."

"You were crazy, Maud. I can not let you go out again alone."

"That was what he said. He looked at me with a stare, saying in such a cold, cold

voice, 'a mad woman!' and shaking off my hand, he walked away from me. I would have run after him, but I had not the power. He wished me to think that he did not know me, but I saw his face flush even when he spoke so rudely."

"You have made some mortifying mistake, my child."

"Do you think I could look straight into his eyes, and not know him, father?"

"What hour was it when you saw him under the bridge? Was it not a little dark, there, these brief afternoons?"

"It was after sunset; it was not broad daylight, but I could see plainly enough. I would not have gone down if it had been at all dark; it would not have been proper."

They cross-questioned her, in vain, to elicit something which they could use to refute her simple, persistent assurance that she had seen Ward. They could get nothing from her but the repetition of this—to her—fact: She grew more calm as they talked with her, regaining her natural expression, and they thought best to seem to be convinced, and to drop the subject. At her mother's request she prepared herself and came down to the neglected dinner, but her appetite was evidently forced.

"If he would only give me a chance to explain, mother, I would be content. I do not blame him for keeping away from me," she whispered, when her mother came to look at her, in bed, under the pretense of the good-night kiss.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SKATING CARNIVAL.

Mrs. Bowen was again a happy woman. We will not do her the injustice to say that she had forgotten her brother, who had cherished her more tenderly than ever her husband would cherish her, admiring and indulging her in a way that had fostered even her gratitude—she had not forgotten Ward! Oh, no! there was not a day that she did not drop some tear to his memory, while the awful manner of his death afflicted her with a frightened, unpleasant consciousness which never entirely left her.

"If only he had not committed suicide!"—and she wept in the daylight and shuddered in the dark, feeling never quite so gay and at ease as she had done before that calamity. But comparatively, she was a happy woman. Mr. Bowen was reinstated in business, doing well—exceedingly well—and had bought a still finer house than their former one, high up on the Avenue, had furnished it "charmingly," and had recalled her from that dreary banishment, back to her own beautiful world of New York, with her visiting-list reestablishing itself, and money, *ad libitum*, with which to go shopping. Her brother had been dead a year, and she was to take off those black garments, and clothe herself in robes not quite so gloomy. Much discrimination could be shown in the selection of second-mourning. She was almost as youthful and pretty as ever in those soft, black and white things, and lilac, and lavender. It gave just that shade of pensiveness which made her childlike beauty most touching—as painters love to depict fair flowers half in shadow.

We have hitherto mentioned the ease of conscience with which Mr. Bowen slipped the largest share of guilt onto shoulders powerless to repel it; and with what admirable suavity he persuaded his friends that his sins were only mistakes of judgment, or rather of circumstance, and that, really, his business talents were not such as should be hidden in a napkin.

Three months had not elapsed after the failure before a most favorable compromise had been effected; money had been loaned "the surviving partner," and he soon was in the full tide of business, with none to make him afraid. Some few of his former friends, like Mr. Arnold, continued to treat him coldly; but, on the whole, the broker was more than satisfied. Even Mr. Arnold's judgment had been less severe, after he was paid sixty cents on the dollar, with the assurance that, although no longer legally responsible, Mr. Bowen held himself bound, in honor, to pay a hundred cents, as soon as he was sufficiently prospered to do so.

So great an art had Mr. Bowen of placing himself always in the right, that none thought of establishing his taste in buying himself a new establishment, and dashing out with more than his former splendor, before the hundred cents on the dollar actually were paid. His creditors, glad to see him "recovering himself," looked confidently forward to the time when his credit should be fully redeemed, and when they, too, should rejoice in the full discharge of their compounded claims.

In the mean time, there was a little secret about his present rapid success. When the assets of the firm were turned over to the creditors, there were certain investments in two newly-formed petroleum companies, made by Ward Tunnecliffe, from means of his own. These at the final settlement were withheld from the list of assets, as being neither the firm's property, nor as possessing any real value. The creditors knew nothing of them, and it is possible if they had, they would have taken no account of them, as the two companies were then merely and purely an experiment. The shares, if put upon the market then, would have sold for much less than they had actually cost. Hence, and for other reasons, perhaps, Mr. Bowen

kept discreetly silent about them. Of course Mr. Tunnecliffe's sister, being his nearest relative, was his heir.

After the compromise was effected, some time late in the summer, it chanced that those two petroleum companies' stock suddenly rose immensely. Mr. Bowen still said nothing about his wife's share in this good fortune. Before selling out, he saw fit to pay a visit of inspection to the oil regions, when, finding the property really extremely valuable, and the companies already beginning to pay large dividends, he went home, well satisfied to keep the stock. Mrs. Bowen, by her agent, drew her dividends; Aladdin's palace was bought and the Genii of the lamp established therein. Mrs. Bowen only had to rub the lamp once in six months, and the Genii would be sure to appear.

So much for the lately embarrassed gentleman's present prospects. It became daily more apparent to him that his brother-in-law had been a great fool to take so dark a view of their little misfortunes; if Ward had been less rash, he might have owned the lamp, and been living in comfort and splendor, instead of making food for fishes. Yet, there was this to be remembered—and it softened the regret he felt at the young man's folly—if Ward had had a voice in matters, those profitable shares would have been divided among the creditors, and they would now be enjoying the magical lamp! Perhaps it was best as it was.

But why, even as the brother-in-law assured himself of this, smiling inwardly, did the smile turn to a cold chill? Why did he, who knew not what it was to be troubled with a nerve, start and glance about, while a wet and frozen hand seemed to reach out and touch his breast?

Mrs. Bowen and Maud Arnold were great friends, nowadays. As soon as the former returned to the city, and let her abiding-place be known, Maud had gone to her. She had her parents' consent to this, though not their approval. If they had denied her request to renew the friendship, she might have openly rebelled, for those long months of winter which had brought so pleasant a change for Susie, had been less prosperous to Maud. Her whole mind was occupied with one illusion, or what her friends treated as such. She felt that unless she had a *confidante*, who sympathized and believed with her, she should indeed go mad. She only too painfully understood that it was already hinted that she was touched with an aberration of mind.

So powerful had been her own conviction that Ward was alive, and not far from her, that she had over-persuaded her father and Mr. Bowen to search out the pilot of the Golden, and each separate person who had seen Ward throw himself into the river, and sift their testimony more closely even than had been done at the time of the occurrence. Nothing was elicited upon which the lightest hope could be hung. The story was, and remained in all its few details, as it has been told. A man, without his hat, of a light and build corresponding with young Tunnecliffe's, had walked out of the gentlemen's cabin, at that moment unoccupied, stepped over the chains, and leaped into the river. He had never risen to the surface; he could not have been rescued, for dozens of eyes were watching, and there were no small boats out, nor could there be, in that drifting, dangerous ice. Immediately after, Tunnecliffe's hat and coat were found in the cabin; he was known to have gone on the boat, for the ticket-agent on the New York side remembered him; he was not known to have left it, except in the manner described—he had never been seen or heard from since, by any one but this young lady who clung to her statement with such strange obstinacy.

The inquiries made to satisfy Maud were as private as possible, for her parents were naturally sensitive about having her morbid fancy become known. Still dissatisfied and urgent, she insisted upon Mr. Arnold's secretly employing two detectives to search the city for the missing man. This he did, or pretended to do, in the hope of quieting her, until her mind should have time to recover its tone. Whether these detectives did or did not perform their duty, the tidings for which Maud waited, day after day, never came. She grew more pale and listless with each succeeding week, indifferent to every thing, yet always with that strange, bright, eager look of the eyes, piercing through those on whom her glance fell. Many evenings, at twilight, she would take her seat by a front window, and there watch the sidewalk until bedtime. Although not permitted to go again to the Park, without company, she asked to go nearly every day, when the weather permitted, and to win the privilege she would consent to skate, or take any other prescribed exercise, though her friends knew that her brain was filled with the secret thought that she might again meet the phantom visitor.

Very late in February there came a cold term which placed the lake in finer condition for skating than it had been previously. A carnival was talked of and decided upon. It was one of the first of those out-door festivals held in America, and attracted large crowds of spectators as well as active participants. The afternoon was as cold and brilliant as the most zealous devotee of the art could have desired; the throng upon the ice was novel and gorgeous to look upon, the skaters being all

in costume, and the dresses generally of the gayest colors. George Arnold, Maud's cousin, prided himself upon his skill on the ice, and would not be satisfied until Maud had promised to go with him, on this occasion, and in character. In the carriage which conveyed them to the Park were two or three older relatives, who were to observe a duennaship from the shore.

Mrs. Arnold was an elegant skater, if not as proficient as some in this fascinating accomplishment. Her slender, supple figure, and movements full of ease, always attracted admiration. George, with boyish enthusiasm, had dressed himself in a costly suit of green velvet and silver, supposed to represent Endymion, though he had to explain to all inquiring friends what character it was expected to support. He had insisted that Maud should play the part of Diana, and as Diana she came, but it was as her serene ladyship under a cloud. Her dress of gray poplin was edged with silver, and in front of her little gray cap was a silver crescent; over her shoulder, appeared the legendary quiver filled with shining arrows, and in her hand she held a little bow. In her paleness and her calmness she looked very like the goddess; all this gayety was something apart from her own individuality; she was amongst, but not of it; she had only come to please George, and—perhaps—to discover him somewhere in the fantastic crowd. Alas, for Maud! into this one wild, delusive dream had her life resolved itself. She looked sweet and sad as Diana's self, and George was proud of her as he led her out upon the lake, which was filled with skaters before their arrival. The ice was in its greatest possible perfection; gay laughter and merry shouts rung on the sharp air; George tired his cousin out in a little while; but not having in the least fatigued himself, he left her in a chair near the shore, and went off to exercise some of his "particularly difficult" feats.

Mrs. Arnold quietly watched the constantly changing scene before her. She had thrown a thin gray veil over her face to protect herself somewhat from the admiring attention she received from passers-by. All sorts of people flitted and glided over the polished floor in front of her—awkward but happy Teutons, rosy and fat, in their native skating dress, fairies, princes, Atalantas, all the usual variety and sameness of like occasions. For a time she was amused. But the great grief which was so swiftly withering her youth asserted itself even here. She fixed her eyes on the frozen lake, and as she gazed, it seemed to break up, groan, drift and crash, while amidst its shattered fragments she saw a struggling form. So lost was she in this terrible work of her fancy that she was about to start up with a shriek, when the tone of a woman's voice, who was passing her, arrested and called her to the present. That voice! she knew it. In a moment—it was the French girl's. A couple were gliding by, quite near, but so absorbed in each other that they had not observed Maud; they were already so far past that she could not catch a glimpse of their faces, but she knew the chattering accents, the slim waist, the short foot and the black, braided hair of Antoinette. In an instant every faculty of Maud's was on the alert. She had in her pocket a black silk mask, which she now put on, doubling her veil over her face, and awaiting the return of the two, who were skating slowly, engaged in conversation. Presently they turned about and repassed her. Yes, it was Antoinette, dressed as "*La fille du Roy*ment." Maud was sure of it, though the girl also wore a mask. They came so close that she distinctly recognized the bird-like chatter, sweet, but not soulful, and saw the little dark hand pressing her companion's arm, as she looked up at him while she spoke.

At first Maud thought she would speak to her at once, asking her to step aside with her a few moments, when she would wring from her, in the name of the dead, the truth or falsehood of the story she had told. Nothing but the presence of the stranger prevented her calling Antoinette by name. She debated within herself how best to arrest the girl without including her companion. In the mean time the two went slowly on, turned, and came back for the second time. It was evidently not skating, nor the scene around them, which absorbed them; they were conversing hastily and eagerly, paying no heed to what was passing.

In her desire to be rid of the person who accompanied Antoinette, Maud, for the first time, looked attentively at him. He was quite small and slender, and wore a domino, probably for purposes of concealment; but Maud was certain, after a moment's observation, that he was Mr. Randolph. She had no intimation of his being in the city; nevertheless, she felt sure of its being him. Her first emotion was fear lest he, in turn, should recognize her.

"I wish I was back in the carriage," she thought, looking after her escort; but George, though not far distant, was drawing marvelous spread-eagles on the ice, and did not observe her signals. Second thoughts assured her that to call her cousin would be to attract attention and recognition, for George was well known to Mr. Randolph. That the Southerner had come to the Park in the hope or for the purpose of meeting her, she believed. Yet her dread and dislike of him were scarcely so

strong as that wish of hers to have another conversation with the French girl; so she sat still, with a quickened pulse, trying to decide upon what course to pursue. Slowly they passed by, without turning their heads in her direction, went further on and were lost amid the throng.

"They will not leave the lake so early! I wish I could trace that girl to her home. If I could but get her address I should pay her a visit to-morrow," mused Maud. "Why are those two together?" was the question which next suggested itself, and so pertinent was this as to arouse, the more she dwelt upon it, vague suspicions, which, while she could not shape them, would not be driven away. Her cousin came up to ask if she would not skate again.

"You'll take cold if you sit still so long, Maud."

"No, George, I like it here. I'm not at all cold; I have a good view of the people, while I can be quiet myself."

With a mock gesture of adoration, young Endymion glided away, leaving Diana to her solitary mood. Suddenly, another figure among the skaters drew her gaze, as it did that of many others. It was that of a man, tall and lithe, dressed in a novel and appropriate costume, representing the god Uller, distinguished, in the legends of the North, for the brightness and strength of his arrows, and the swiftness of his skates. His long yellow hair flowed down his back in a torrent, and his long yellow beard glittered with frost as if his breath had frozen upon it. His garments sparkled in the sunshine with a thousand little frost-points, and there seemed to be ice upon his helmet; a steel visor concealed his face. He, like Maud, had a quiver full of arrows, but of giant size, and he carried an immense bow. Whenever he moved he attracted universal regard, not more on account of the splendor and originality of his costume than the grace and skill of his movements.

As Maud watched him, the eager look leaped to her eyes; she bent forward, gazing intently. Ward Tunnecliffe had once been unrivaled as a skater. Often had she, the previous winter, followed his graceful movements with admiration; something now in the form and motions of the stranger, brought back his image with strange vividness. The old mad fancy came upon her. She started up, with a low cry, which drew the eyes of several persons upon her.

"What is it? are you ill?" they began to question her.

"It is nothing," she said, sinking back in her chair. "I was calling a friend; but I see that I am mistaken."

A sort of cunning, not native to her mind, now actuated her to repress her excitement, and to await some further revelation. We call it cunning, but it was the artifice of a loving heart, eager to verify its presentiments—or, was it the subtle instinct, which is sometimes given to the insane? Her friends, could they have seen her flushed cheeks, and wild, brilliant eyes, while they read what was passing in her thoughts, would have said that it was the latter. For a long time she watched the solitary skater, who spoke to no one, and to whom none spoke. The sun descended on that short February afternoon.

"Cousin Maud, they say it is time for us to go home. Aunt is tired and hungry, and she is afraid you will take cold."

"Well, I'm neither tired nor hungry, George, and not at all chilly. I would like to stay for a little while after dark, to see the illumination. Go and ask mother if we may stay. We can return by the cars; and we will promise to be at home before eight."

"Good for you, cousin Maud. It will be jolly to stop a couple of hours longer," and she sped away, well pleased with her errand.

The moon was shining in full splendor as the sun went down. A silver radiance blent with the rosy flush of sunset, filling the twilight with rich bloom which would have made the glare of the calcium-light impertinent. The officials had the good taste to defer the illumination for a brief time.

No sooner had George departed on his errand than Maud arose and struck out across the lake, toward the flying figure whose long yellow locks and glittering garb she had not for an instant lost sight of. She could not have overtaken him, but that he turned, and glided in her direction. The full moon shone against the silver crescent in her cap; she had removed her mask, and her face, white and impassioned, with its intent, eager eyes, was plainly revealed. Before the god-hunter, with his bow and arrows, reached her, he filtered in his course, turned and shot off in another direction. It might have been accidental, but to Maud it was evidence that he wished to avoid her. She followed after him. He, not aware of being pursued, did not exert himself to distance her, but swept along easily, as if for the pleasure of the movement; yet it required all her strength to overtake him. When she was almost by his side she called out, pleadingly:

"Ward!"

The hunter looked behind him at his girlish pursuer; then, as if satisfied that was mistaken in supposing she spoke, resumed his way, but at greater speed.

"Ward!" she called again, more loudly, in a voice full of terror lest he should not heed or hear her. "Ward, one moment for me."

The hunter sped on more swiftly and she sped after him. Forgetful that others might wonder, at what they saw, oblivious of every thing but that he was again eluding her, she followed on with a speed which surprised herself; spectators began to think that this was a trial of skill between the superb hunter and this slender, beautiful Diana, and paused to look after them as they shot by. Half-way around the lake the strange chase went on, when Maud was again by the hunter's side. She stretched out her hand and grasped his arm.

"You can not deceive me, Ward; I know you. I always know you, no matter what shape you take. Only tell me, whether you are dead or alive! If it be you, Ward, or only your spirit, I care not, so that you will not avoid me thus. I want you to forgive me for that cruel note which I wrote you. Indeed, indeed, it was not because you were in trouble—I did not know of that—it was because that French girl told me that you were bound, in honor, to her!"

All this time they were speeding along, side by side, as if he heard her not, she clinging to his arm, and forcing out her words passionately with the purpose to say them and to make him hear them.

"Ward," she continued, frowning, he would not speak. "I shall not be long away from you. I am dying of grief. My friends know this thing is killing me. If I had not been so harsh to you, I could have borne it better. Oh, my God," she added, softly, to herself, "he can not speak to me, or he would! It is his ghost, but I am not afraid of it. No, no, your shadow is dearer to me than all the substance of this world," and she began to moan and sob as she clung to his arm, still flying over the ice with her silent companion.

By this time they were opposite the chair which Maud had occupied. Suddenly the hunter turned, and with a firm grasp detached her hold from his arm, and forced her into the chair.

"My ring!" cried Maud, as the moonlight glanced like fire from a ring on the little finger of the hand which gently, but forcibly, held her down.

Then, at last, her companion spoke, in a cold, low voice which was familiar and yet strange to her.

"Maud Arnold, you wrong yourself and others who love you, by this mad fancy which you are nursing. Ward Maudcliffe has gone to that—"

"Undiscovered country from whose bourne No traveler returns."

You can not bring him back. Are there not others who can take his place? If he could see you thus, he would be pained. Think no more of him; follow your present duty; be what you ought to be."

A darkness came before her eyes; she knew that he was leaving her, but before she had recovered the will which his touch had rendered powerless, the phantom skater had glided away, and was lost in the throng.

The hand which had touched hers was as cold as death itself, but not more cold than her own, when George came back, and she laid it on his.

"Unbind my skates, cousin; I feel faint and tired, and must go home, after all. If the carriage has not gone yet, I will go home in that, and you can stay here if you wish."

The carriage had not gone; in a few minutes Maud was on her way back to her chamber, which she did not leave for many weary weeks thereafter. A recurrence of the brain-fever of which she had had a slight attack the previous winter caused her old doctor to shake his head—and still more gravely he shook it, when the fever had passed away, and it was known what a wreck it left.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 26.)

Buck and the Horse-thief.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"WATCH! A horse-thief are wuss'n a pole-cat fur downright meanness. They can't no more compare with a squar', stand-up fight robber, than they kin to an honest trapper," was the emphatic assertion that saluted my ears as I drew near a party of rangers gathered around the evening camp-fire.

"You ar' down on that tribe, Buck, ain't you?" asked one of the fellows, winking at the others.

"Down on 'em? Ar' a hungry duck ever down onto a June-bug? or a Lavacca 'skeeter onto a liver-colored city chap? Yes, I be down on 'em, cuss 'em, an' I've got good shovin' ter be," growled Buck Halliday, with savage emphasis.

"Well, they don't seem ter be no great favorites in Texas, now," said another.

"But what makes you hate 'em so, Buck?"

"Well, I'll tell yer why I hates 'em," replied the ranger. "Firstly, 'cause they're a mean, low-lived, white-livered, sneakin' an' cowardly set o' skunks, that won't fight 'cept when they're cornered, an' when they do, they'll stab yer in the back an' then run away. They won't stan' up an' look yer squar' in the face, now. Secondly, the cusses stole ter best hoss that I ever straddled, an' left me afoot on their perairy, three hundred mile from nowhar, blast 'em!"

"I'll tell you how it war."

"We hed been arter a lot uv thievin' Comanch' up on the head-waters uv the Nueces, an' arter the scrimmage I got superated from the ballance, not edzactly lost, but confoundedly bothered, you know, an' so, findin' that I war outen the trail an' no likelihood uv pickin' it up ag'in, I started on a bee-line, all by myself, 'cross the kentry for Sabas Mission, whar I know'd sum uv 'em would be."

"I rid hard all that day, an' camped in a mott uv timber on the banks uv a little creek, whar grass war plenty and water too."

"Arter a good feed off'n a antelope that I throw'd 'bout sundown, I turned in, an' never knew nothin' till sun-up, when suthin' woke me all in a hurry. An' it war time I war stirrin', fer thar stood a ugly-muzzled cuss right over me with a six-shooter in one hand an' my rifle in t'other, while a couple more uv 'em war drawin' the picket-pin to which my critter war roped. I knowed 'em in a minute. Hoss thieves, sez I to myself, an' they've ketch'd me nappin'!"

"Twarn't no use sayin' nothin', an' I didn't, but I marked the villins so es I'd know 'em ag'in."

"Well, they left me afoot, 'bout hoss er rifle, an' nothin' but the antelope karkidge ter keep me from starvin'."

"Es they rid off, lendin' my critter, one uv 'em ups an' sez, with a larf, 'I reckon you'll do, ole man, ye seem ter hev good, long legs fer travelin', at which they all larf, es though 'twur mighty smart an' funny."

"I didn't say nothin' to that, but I kep' up a larf—uv a thinkin', an' I thinks—'mong other things—these here legs 'ar goin' ter last till they ketches up with you, ennyhow, an' when they doose, why look out, thet's all."

"'Twur a long tramp, fellers, to Sabas, but I made it, an' thar I got another hoss, an' started fur San Antonio, which war headquarters them days. The boyses pestered me right smart 'bout ter sarcumstance, but I hed ter grin an' bear it, fer 'twould 'a' been foolishness ter hev got mad, an' I jess went along quiet like, keepin' both eyes skinned for a sight uv that funny fellow what hed said he reckind my legs war good 'uns. An' it warn't long afore I see the skunk, an' may I be sting ter death by scorpions, ef he warn't ridin' my hoss jess es big es life."

"I war crosstin' the Plazy, me an' sum more uv the boyses, when I see him, an' ye kin bet I warn't long lettin' 'em know what war up."

"The cuss hed seen me, too, an' he war off like a streak uv greased lightning, makin' fer the open kentry west uv the town."

"It didn't take us more'n half a day ter git in our saddles, an' then the darndest chase begun thet ever I hed in all my borned days."

"The feller knowed he war a-ridin' fer life, an' he didn't spar my hoss, which made me madder'n I war afore."

"At 'Clato creek we begun ter gain, an' from thet the race war all one-sided. I knowed ef I could git close't enough fer the hoss to hear my voice he'd chuck the skunk over his head an' kin back ter me, an' sure 'nough, by 'm-by I fetched a whoop to try the effect."

"He-he-he-hoo! I jess wish sum uv ye could 'a' seen thet critter. Fust he pricked up his ears, an' then he tried ter look backw'ds, but the bit war too strong an' he giv ter trick up."

"I fetched another, an' this time the hoss knowed who it war es war a-chasin' uv him, an' he commenced his anticks."

"He rared up, an' kicked up, he jumped fust on one side an' then on t'other; he bolted an' stopp'd short, an' bymby he jess laid right down in the trail and wallered."

"That fixed the cussed thief, fur afore he c'd git his feet outen ter stirrups, we war onto him, an' had him roped neck an' heels."

"He war like all the rest uv 'em, a darned coward, an' so he begun beggin' fur his life afore a word was said."

"Shet up, you infernal hoss-thief!" sez one of the fellers. "We'll have mercy on ye; oh, yes, lots uv it. Won't we, boyses?"

"Well, to make an cend uv it, a counsell uv war war bilt, an' the simultaneous voice ed es how he must go under."

"We draw'd los who sh'd'n'd gully him, an' it fell to me, an' so I got ready fur to execute the sentence. We cut loose the skunk's feet, so es he could travel, an' then I put the noose uv my lariar round his neck an' mounted, fust makin' my cend uv the rope fast to the pommel."

"When every thing war ready, we started on a slow lope, the hoss-thief folerin' me at a lively run, and a pleadin' fur mercy at every jump."

"I never looked back, but I c'd feel him bobbin' at the end, an' purty soon we struck a gallup. I felt the lariar get tighter an' tighter, an' purty soon the strain settled into a reg'lar pull, an' I knowed the jig war up."

"An' so it war, fur when we stopp'd, an' cut him loose, his own daddy wouldn't 'a' knowed him."

"Twur a severe sentence, boyses, but he deserv'd it, same es every skunk uv thet like do—an' you see, it kep' him from stealin' enny more hosses."

BEGGARS always go away from my house with a good deal more than they bring—that is, a good deal more indignation.

Cruiser Crusoe!
OR,
LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAPAYETTE LAPORTE.

NUMBER THIRTY-EIGHT.

It may readily be imagined that my very flesh creep, as dropping my gun, by a convulsive effort, I turned, and then immediately, and to my fancy, very fortunately, dropped myself to the ground.

It was a small, black, and rather savage African bear—a class of animal, the very existence of which was new to me. I was not much hurt, as my fall was from no very great height; and then it was, moreover, broken by the body of the wolf, which lay stone dead at the foot of the tree. Hastily picking myself up, and looking into the tree, I perceived that the bear was very irascible, and having no doubt of his predatory habits, I determined on a grand execution all at once.

Having cut the string for the gazelle to escape, my gun was hastily loaded, each with two bullets, so that even at the risk of bursting my gun, the chances might be in my favor.

The black bear is an animal not to be trifled with in his savage mood, but very gentle and playful when tamed.

He looked rather curiously down at me, and then at the dead wolves. It was quite apparent to me that, during the whole early part of the evening, this ugly customer, very likely after a hearty gorge, had concealed himself amid the leafy boughs of this or some other tree, where he lay heavy asleep, and had, perhaps, come down in a friendly way to see what was the matter, when he heard the strange report of guns, to him something as novel and startling as his presence was to me.

After some delay, as if uncertain whether to affront this strange being, which stood calmly, as it appeared to him, surveying the scene, he began to descend, hindquarters first. In a moment of haste, I leveled, and was about to fire, when it came to my recollection that a bear must be either shot in the head or the heart. I waited, then, until he turned and made slowly toward me, with that shambling gait which is the peculiarity of all his tribe.

With as calm a nerve as I could collect, I took aim and fired. An awful growl followed, and the bear, wounded and savage, rose on his hind legs. His eyes were frightfully wild, and fearful to lose the chance, I fired at his heart. The animal stood still, as if struck to stone, and then rolled over, a warm but lifeless mass of clay. I snuff, myself, almost equally inert and helpless, at the foot of a palm tree, to regain my lost breath.

After a few minutes, every drop of water being exhausted from my gourd, I crawled to the rill which supplied the gazelles, and along which my palms were rising beautifully—making a great increase in the volume of water—and refreshed myself both with a drink and a wash. This done, I returned to the scene of my terrible combat; and having, on the previous night, prepared myself for the emergency, hoisted by ropes the whole party of bandits with their feet just away from the ground—a sight which I hoped would act as an example and a warning to other thieves.

This done, I returned to my cave, where my dependents were glad to see me, and here I remained all day, having been exceedingly fatigued with my night of combat and watching. Calculating back on that day, it came into my head to notice that I was about five years older than when I was cast away, which was a serious reflection, and drove me to think that in all probability I should end my days there.

This was, when seriously thought of, a most melancholy and terrible reflection. Out off forever from all communion with my species, never to know the sweet companionship of a wife, never to call my warbling prattlers my children, were sad drawbacks, indeed, to the pleasure of this life, and enough, however much one might try to be grateful, to make one discontented with one's lot. It is not good for men to live alone, whatever hermits, generally worn-out men of the world, may say—and I felt that it was not, every day of my life.

This made me melancholy, so that I would gladly have risen and hunted or fished, but I was exhausted and feverish. I was, I foresaw it, going to be ill. Anxiety, the excitement of the contest, and the exposures to the night-air, perhaps on this occasion more noxious than others, were about to prostrate me.

No wonder that I had instinctively hoped for companionship, for the gentle hand of a nurse. While, however, I had strength, I collected my gourds together, filled them with water, and placed them behind my bunk, which was safer than my hammock. Then every egg which could be found in my poultry-yard, with some light cakes, were put on a shelf. Then, cold shivers coming over me, I lay down in a wild, feverish sort of ague, and in a few minutes either lost my senses or fell asleep.

When I first opened my eyes again, I thought I should have died, so weak, prostrated, and utterly without energy, I was. I with difficulty put out my hand—it was thin and white—to reach a drop of water. All the bowls were empty. Had I drank them; or had my animals helped themselves? This was scarcely likely, as they

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had plenty without. But water I must have, still, and you will admit, naturally.

But what is that shadow which darkens the entrance to my room, upon which a faint ray falls from the entrance of the cave? I turned my eyes round. Heavens! what hideous monster is this? and I all unprotected and alone! It approached my bedside and peered at me with its fearful eyes. Then I knew it—it was Castor, and beside him was Pollux.

I held out my hand. The faithful creature, which was used to this familiarity on my part, took it, and uttered a grunt of satisfaction. Then catching up the empty bowl and putting it to my mouth, I made signs to drink, and then turned the bowl up, and shook my head. As I fully expected, the intelligent animal understood me at once; the chimpanzee, and especially the orang-outang, being very excellent servants in their way—fetching water and drawing loads.

Away he ran, followed by the other—which was so exactly a counterpart that I always shall believe they were twins—and soon returned with a bowl of fresh water; after draining which off, and eating an egg, I fell asleep once more. When I awoke all fever was gone, and I was able to crawl out of my bunk and search for some fresh eggs; those which I had by my bedside being quite stale and bad.

Several raw eggs, with a little dried fish, seemed to do me good, and I sat down under the shade of a palm tree, to revive myself by the action of the air, which is, after all, nature's best and sweetest restorer for the invalid.

All this time I had serious thoughts that something was missing, which I discovered in a few minutes to be my dogs, which, being tired and wanting quiet on my return from the gazelle valley, I had shut out. Had they all left me, and gone away? Perhaps so. To all appearance, it was I who had deserted them. I could, however, not venture to see after them yet. Toward evening I made an omelette with some salted gazelle dripping and a lot of eggs, which I ate with great pleasure.

Soon after this I went to bed, and woke in the morning quite well, only very weak. But once the malady is over, a good dose of open air exercise is the best medicine, so I determined to have a ride. For this purpose I opened my barred gate and went forth. The zebra and horse were nowhere to be seen. This was a disappointment, but it had to be borne philosophically, on the principle, that what can not be cured must be endured, so, leaning on a stick, I walked slowly about in shady places, until, quite suddenly, I came on my zebra and horse, grazing. They were close together in the most friendly way in the world.

I had a halter and a bowl of corn, but it seemed to me almost impossible for one so weak to capture any thing so swift and skittish. Still, as nothing is to be done without trying, I advanced slowly toward them.

They did not move, but continued grazing without the slightest fear. They certainly walked away a little, but when they saw the well-known bowl of corn, they came slowly up to where I stood. I gave them both some grains of their favorite food, after which I secured the horse and led it toward a stone, by means of which only could I mount.

The zebra followed quietly, though what had become of my favorite young one was a puzzle, which in my own mind I wished particularly to unravel.

Having mounted the horse, I rode quietly toward my cave, where having arrived, I saddled the patient steed, and then once more rode forth in search of that which was now so much needed—health and strength. That day I did not go far, but contented myself with a visit to my gazelle valley, where, finding every thing in order, I drove the gazelles into the inner valley.

I had not been long on my way toward the piggery, when there was a rush in the woods, and my dogs came bounding toward me with open mouths. Had I been on foot, in my weak state, they would very easily have overcome my strength, and as it was, I had playfully to drive them off.

On my return to the cave, where I was now accompanied by my live stock, I found that the open air and exercise had given me an appetite, which, however, I took care to satisfy only with eggs and light food generally, as the wetness of my stomach would have made me revolt against any more generous food.

By taking great care of myself, and being much in the open air, in one week I was quite well, and able, not only to enjoy my food, but to do any thing that was necessary—and though a history of my daily experiences would be wearisome in the extreme, yet was there much to be done in the way of planting, reaping, snaring birds, fishing, and the like. Let no one fancy that my life was all play. It was as the life of any man who has to supply himself with food, clothing and a habitation, full of labor and arduous occupations of every kind.

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